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Vol II

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ENGLISH MERCHAN

MEMOIRS

IN ILLUSTRATION OF

THE PROGRESS OF BRITISH COMMERC

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BY

H. R. FOX BOURNE,

AUTHOR OF "A MEMOIR OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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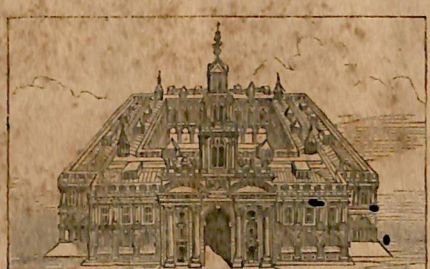

THE SECOND LONDON EXCHANGE.

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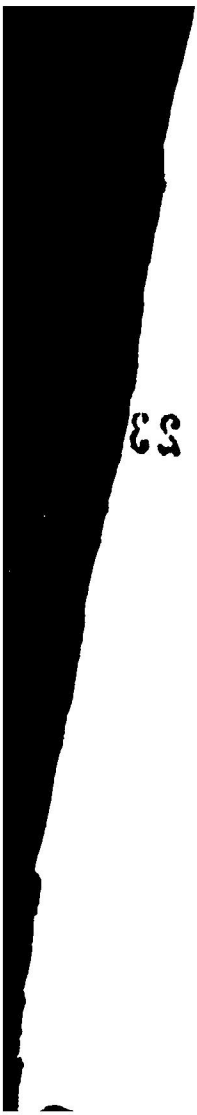

ENGLISH MERCHANTS.

VOL II.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHARING CROSS.

SIR JOHN BARNARD, LORD MAYOR OF LONDON.

Vol. II., frontispiece.

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ENGLISH MERCHANTS.

CHAPTER XVII.

ENGLISH COMMERCE FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

A NEW period in the history of English commerce, a period of prosperity so wonderful that the most ardent enthusiast could never have foreseen it in his wildest dreams, began about a century ago. The long training through which, in successive generations, our merchants had passed as members of various guilds and companies, and the hindrances they had long been subject to from their own mistaken principles of trade and from the arbitrary and unreasonable interferences of kings and politicians, at length issued in substantial freedom of action and in that increase of wit in action that can only come through long and painful bondage. The establishment of sound views in all departments of political and commercial economy, and the sudden access of mechanical and artistic power that gave new life to every branch of manufacturing industry, are the two great internal causes of England's mercantile advancement during the past three or four generations. Another, and the chief external, cause—also to be traced back to the internal enterprise of the country—has been the rapid growth of its colonial empire.

British possessions in India were, in the middle of the eighteenth century, still insignificant; but all the American colonies held by England were, by that time, firmly established, and they had already surpassed every European nation in the extent and value of their commerce with the mother-country. In 1761, the first year of George the Third's reign, and the year that, better than any other, may be taken as the first of the new era, the entire exports from Great Britain, to all parts of the world, amounted to 16,038,913*l.*, the corresponding imports to 10,292,541*l.* The value of the exports to North America and the West Indies was 3,330,371*l.*, or more than a fifth of the whole; the value of the imports thence was 3,726,261*l.*, or more than a third.* In 1769, the North American colonies pos-

* The value of exports from Scotland was 304,527*l.*; of imports, 379,662*l.* These are some of the chief details for England:—

	Exports.	Imports.
Hudson's Bay, Newfoundland, Cape Breton, Quebec, and Nova Scotia	£349,524	£50,689
New England, New York, and Pennsylvania	827,863	134,043
Virginia, Maryland, Carolina, and Georgia	824,218	713,850
Jamaica	441,618	932,197
Guadaloupe	131,942	482,179
Saint Christopher's	134,069	294,850
Barbadoes	215,479	253,900
Antigua	108,244	280,869
Bermuda, Montserrat, Nevis, New Providence, Saint Croix, Saint Thomas, Tortola, Monte Christi, Saint Eustathius	56,803	203,319

These are the figures given for the chief European countries:—

	Exports.	Imports.
Holland	£2,682,165	£524,109
Germany	2,331,998	716,746
Portugal	1,266,171	250,167
Italy	203,635	761,916
The Mediterranean	389,577	103,628
Flanders	425,130	30,546
France	177,393	480
Russia	47,718	843,185
The East Country	202,254	133,536
Denmark and Norway	155,240	103,663
Sweden	26,126	298,750
Turkey	54,282	163,366

CRAIK, *History of British Commerce* (London, 1844), vol. iii., pp. 10–12.

sessed 389 ships of their own, 113 being square-rigged vessels, the others sloops and schooners, with a total burthen of 20,001 tons. Most of these were employed in inter-colonial trade, and the trade with Europe was carried on almost entirely in European vessels. In this year the colonies received 90,710 tons of shipping from Great Britain and Ireland, 34,151 from other parts of Europe and from Africa, and 94,916 from the British and foreign West Indies. In return, they sent 99,121 tons to Great Britain and Ireland, 42,601 to the rest of Europe and to Africa, and 96,382 to the West Indies.* That was the condition of British American commerce at the commencement of the disputes that resulted in American fighting for independence. In 1800 the exports from Great Britain to the colonies in the West Indies and on the Continent that still were subject to it, had far exceeded those sent to all the colonies in 1761, and the imports were nearly twice as great, while our trade with the United

* CRAIK, vol. iii., pp. 38, 39. In illustration of the condition of American commerce a hundred years ago, let one other extract be given from the same work (p. 41, condensing the details of MACPHERSON, *Annals of Commerce*, vol. iii., pp. 570-578):—"In the year 1770, from all the British continental colonies, including the islands of Newfoundland, Bahama, and Bermuda, the principal exports to Great Britain were, 1,173 tons of potashes, 737 of pearlashes, 5,747 of pig-iron, 2,102 of bar-iron, 584,593 pounds of indigo, 5,202 tons of whale-oil, 112,971 pounds of whale-fins, 74,073 barrels of rice, 78,115 of common tar, 15,125 of turpentine, 3,043 tons of masts, yards, &c., 6,013,519 feet of pine, oak, and cedar boards, 4, 921,020 staves and headings, furs to the value of 91,485*l.*, 799,652 pounds of deer skins, and tobacco to the value of 904,981*l.* The other principal exports were, to Ireland, 305,083 bushels of flax seed; to the south of Europe, 431,386 quintals of dried fish, 588,561 bushels of wheat, 18,501 tons of bread and flour, and 36,296 barrels of rice; to the West Indies, 351,625 pounds of spermaceti candles, 206,081 quintals of dried fish, 29,582 barrels of pickled fish, 402,958 bushels of Indian corn, 49,337 bushels of peas and beans, 23,449 tons of bread and flour, 2,870 tons of beef and pork, 167,313 pounds of butter, 4,033 barrels of rice, 8,548 pounds of loaf-sugar, 85,035 pounds of soap, onions to the value of 6,378*l.*, 35,922,168 feet of pine, oak, and cedar boards, 11,116,141 staves and headings, 3,817,899 hoops, 62,099 short hogsheads, 3,184 heads of cattle, 6,692 horns, 12,797 sheep and hogs, and 183,893 pounds of tallow and lard. To Africa the only considerable export was 292,965 gallons of New England rum, of which spirit, also, a much larger quantity was sent from the New England colonies to the Indians of Nova Scotia and Canada."

States, the West Indies and the Canadian and adjacent provinces in 1800, was only a fifth less than our trade with all the world in 1761. In the later year Great Britain sent goods worth 6,885,500*l.* to the United States, receiving in ieu commodities valued at 2,358,216*l.* Its exports to the British West Indies amounted to 3,416,966*l.*, its imports thence to 5,805,787*l.* From Canada, New Brupswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Hudson's Bay, the articles received were valued at 975,986*l.*, while the articles sent thither were found to be worth 393,696*l.**. Since then American commerce has every year made vast increase. In 1860 Great Britain exported to the United States, goods worth 22,907,681*l.*, and received thence other goods, the chief being cotton, worth 44,724,312*l.* For the same year the export trade with the British North American colonies amounted to 3,854,834*l.*, the import trade to 6,641,935*l.* The West Indies have retrograded, the exports of 1860 being only valued at 2,020,768*l.*, the imports at 4,399,917*l.*; but the aggregate trade of these districts has been more than quadrupled in sixty years.†

In the same period of sixty years the trade of Great Britain, with India and China, has increased more than sixfold. In 1860 it was eight-and-twenty times as great as it had been in 1761. In that year our exports to the East Indies amounted only to 845,797*l.*, our imports thence to 840,987;‡ hardly more in the aggregate than the exports to and imports from the island of Jamaica. The government of the East India Company was just then entering upon a new stage. With the victory of Plassy, won by Clive in 1757, began the development of military power and territorial aggrandizement that has led to the establishment of our present vast empire in India. The old-fashioned trade continued, without loss, while Clive, Hastings, and Corn-

* Craik, vol. iii., pp. 171–173.

† Capper, *The Port and Trade of London* (London, 1862), pp. 301, 405, 418. ‡ Craik, vol. iii., p. 12.

wa[illegible]is were persuing their conquests, and there was especial advancement of commerce, under the Company's auspices, with China and other Asiatic countries. But the time had already passed for trade to be as prosperous under any great company's monopoly as in the hands of private adventurers, and this greatest of all companies, as it increased in possessions, found it more profitable to extort money from its subjects by arbitrary systems of taxation than to acquire it by honest commerce. More traffic was done during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and early in the nineteenth, by independent traders, acting in violation of the monopoly and turning to the best advantage the meagre liberties accorded by Parliament, than by the East India Company itself. The Company, indeed, not caring to increase its commerce, still less caring to aid the private traders, sought to prove that there was no market for English goods in India. "The small demand for foreign commodities in India," urged its governors in 1809, "results from the nature of the Indian people, their climate and their usages. The articles of first necessity their own country furnishes more abundantly and more cheaply than it is possible for Europe to supply them. The labour of the great body of the common people only enables them to subsist on rice and to wear a slight covering of cotton cloth; they, therefore, can purchase none of the superfluities we offer them. The comparatively few in better circumstances, restricted, like the rest, by numerous religious and civil customs, of which all are remarkably tenacious, find few of our commodities to their taste, and their climate, so dissimilar to ours, renders many of them unsuitable to their use; so that a commerce between them and us cannot proceed far upon the principle of supplying mutual wants. Hence, except woollens, in a very limited degree, for mantles in the cold season, and metals, on a scale also very limited, to be worked up by their own artizans for the few utensils they use, hardly any of our staple commodities find a vent among the Indians; the

other exports which Europe sends to India being chiefly consumed by the European population there, and some of the descendants of the early Portuguese settlers, all of whom, taken collectively, form but a small body, in view to any question of national commerce."*

English merchants thought otherwise. At the granting of a new charter in 1793, it was stipulated by Parliament that the Company should provide three thousand tons of shipping every year for the use of private traders. This was done, but with so many hindrances to the traders, that they were able to make little use of their privilege. Therefore the subject was reconsidered by Parliament, and in April, 1814, the trade was thrown open to the public. In that year the exports of the Company amounted to 826,558*l.*, and those of private merchants to 1,048,132*l.* In 1817, the Company's trade had sunk to 638,382*l.*, the private commerce had risen to 2,750,333*l.* In 1828, the Company sent to India only 488,601*l.*'s worth of goods, while the private traders exported to the value of 3,979,072*l.* Every later year the merchants' trade advanced, and the Company's declined almost as rapidly. In 1840 the total exports from Great Britain to the eastern marts, exclusive of China, amounted to 6,023,192*l.* In 1850, they were assessed at 8,022,665*l.*; and by 1860, they had risen to 17,683,669*l.*, with 5,318,036*l.* additional for China. For the same year the shipments from the British East Indies were valued at 15,106,595*l.*, those from China at 9,323,764.†

With other quarters of the world our trade has also mightily advanced; but with none more notably than Australia. In 1760, Australia was almost an unknown land to Englishmen. It had been visited by Dampier in 1688, and again in 1699; but it was little thought of prior to Cook's discoveries on the east coast in 1770. Those dis-

* *Papers published by authority of the East India Company* (London, 1813), p. 21.

† CAFFER, pp. 356, 357, 100, 191.

coveries led to the colonization of Sydney, in 1788, chiefly, to be valued as a penal colony down to the year 1848. The city of Melbourne was founded only about 1835, Adelaide in 1836, and Port Phillip in 1838. Yet in 1860, the goods brought from Australia amounted to 5,527,995*l.*, besides 6,719,857*l.*'s worth of gold and silver; and the corresponding exports were valued at 9,539,938*l.* In 1810, the Australian colonists sent home 167 pounds of wool; in 1820 the quantity had risen to 99,415 pounds; in 1830 to 1,967,309 pounds; in 1840 to 9,724,243 pounds; in 1850 to 39,018,221 pounds; and in 1860 to 59,165,939 pounds, valued at 5,387,078*l.*, the imports of wool from all other parts of the world in this year being estimated at 5,317,844*l.**

It is unnecessary to show in detail, how our commerce with Europe has been helped on by the growth of our own colonial and American trade. In 1761 our exports to Holland were assessed at 2,682,165*l.*, our imports thence at 524,109*l.* In 1860 the exports were four times, the imports sixteen times as great. To France, under the deterring influences of bad statesmanship, with the Methuen Treaty for its worst achievement, we sent, in 1761, goods worth 177,393*l.*; the corresponding imports were estimated at only 480*l.* In 1860, the year following the Cobden Treaty, the exports amounted to 12,701,372*l.*, the imports to 17,774,031*l.* In 1761, again, Russia received from us 47,718*l.*'s worth of goods, and sent us back commodities valued at 843,185*l.* In 1860 the exports amounted to 5,446,279*l.*; the imports exceeded 16,000,000*l.* The trade of Great Britain, with all its colonies and all foreign countries, Ireland being then considered one of the foreign countries, comprised, in 1761, imports valued at 10,292,541*l.*, and exports to the amount of 16,038,913*l.* In 1860, the imports from all parts of the world to Great Britain and Ireland were estimated at 210,530,000*l.*, the exports from it at 164,470,000*l.*†

* Capper, pp. 384, 387. † *Ibid.*, pp. 490, 491, &c.

Of the latter sum, 135,840,000*l.* stood for the domestic produce of Great Britain and Ireland, and the articles manufactured therein. The domestic produce and the manufactured articles consumed at home cannot be assessed. The vast increase of foreign and colonial trade, bringing into our country immense quantities of cotton, flax, silk, wool and iron, sugar, grain, tea, coffee and live animals, oil and timber, drugs and dyes of all sorts, has been in part the cause, in part the consequence, of the wonderful development of manufacturing energy apparent in our country during the last hundred years or so. Of this we shall see frequent evidence in later pages. Here we may briefly glance at the history of the iron trade and iron manufacture in England, in illustration of the general progress of its industrial history.

There have been iron-works in England ever since the time of the Romans, although in the middle ages iron brought from the shores of the Bay of Biscay was preferred to that produced in England. Our superiority over other nations dates from the time when coal took the place of wood as fuel. Until then, indeed, no great effort was made to extend the trade. In 1354 the exportation of iron was prohibited on account of the scarcity of timber,* and in 1581 the erection of iron-works was forbidden, within certain distances from London and the Thames, 'for the preservation of the woods.' † Forty years later, in 1621, Lord Dudley obtained a patent for 'the mystery and art of melting iron ore, and of making the same into cast works or bars, with sea-coals or pit-coals, in furnaces, with bellows,' which had been introduced by his famous son Dud Dudley.‡ Dudley suffered much from the persecution of rival iron-masters; but, he said, "I went on with my inventions

* Anderson, *Origin of Commerce* (London, 1801), vol. i., p. 337.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 152.

‡ Fairbairn, *Iron, its History, Properties, and Processes of Manufacture* (Edinburgh, 1865), p. 8.

cheerfully, and made annually great store of iron, good and merchantable, and sold it unto divers men at 12*l.* per ton. I also made all sorts of cast-iron wares, as brewing cisterns, pots, mortars, and the like, better and cheaper than any yet made in these nations with charcoal."* After persevering efforts Dudley succeeded in producing seven tons of iron a week, "the greatest quantity of pit-coal iron," as he said, "ever yet made in Great Britain;"† and he had an able coadjutor in his efforts to advance the iron trade in Andrew Yarranton. In 1677, too, a Doctor Frederick de Blewstane obtained a patent for "a new and effectual way of melting down, forging, extracting, and reducing of iron and all metals with pit-coal and sea-coal, as well and effectually as ever hath yet been done by charcoal, and with much less charge."‡ But many years elapsed before the plan of substituting coal for timber obtained much favour.

In the meanwhile a long and curious battle was being waged between the home manufactories and the people of the young American colonies, who were desirous of increasing the demand for the iron they had just learned to produce. In 1719, it was reckoned, iron, wrought with charcoal, was third in the rank of English manufactures, and gave employment to two hundred thousand persons. These people, urged the colonists and their friends at home, were burning up all the wealth of England. "The waste and destruction of the woods in the counties of Warwick, Stafford, Hereford, Monmouth, Gloucester, and Salop, by these ironworks," it was said in the House of Commons, "is not to be imagined. If some care be not taken to preserve our timber from these consuming furnaces, there will not be oak enough left to supply the Royal Navy and our mercantile shipping."§ The iron workers, on the other hand, protested that if the colonists wished to enrich them-

* Smiles, *Industrial Biography* (London, 1863), pp. 50, 51.
† *Ibid.*, p. 51. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 78. § Anderson, vol. iii., p. 89.

selves and the mother-country at the same time, they should send their timber to England instead of using it in their own furnaces; and therefore a bill was brought into Parliament enjoining that 'none in the plantations should manufacture iron wares of any kind whatever, out of any sows, pigs, or bars whatever.'* That cruel and short-sighted ordinance necessarily did much harm to the colonists, who, had it been rigidly complied with, would have been unable to make a single nail, bolt, or screw for themselves, or to procure them from any market nearer than England. With good reason, they made a fresh complaint in 1737. At their instigation, it was represented in Parliament that, 'by reason of our woods being so far exhausted,' England could not possibly make more than the 18,000 tons of pig iron at that time being produced each year, as was proved by the fact that, to meet the needs of the market, nearly 20,000 tons had to be brought from Sweden and Russia, at a cost to the country of about 180,000*l.* a year. Surely it would be better to bring that supply from our own colonies, and so benefit them instead of any foreign power.† The argument prevailed in time. In 1750 an act was passed 'to encourage the importation of pig and bar iron from his Majesty's colonies in America, and to prevent the erection of any mill or other engine for slitting or rolling of iron, or any plating-forge to work with a tilt-hammer, or any furnace for making of steel, in the said colonies;'‡ thus forbidding them to do any but the roughest work, and reserving all the fine manipulation for England, to which the pig-iron was to be shipped. Even that jealous law, however, was immediately productive of good, both to the colonies and to the mother-country, and in due time it led to a further development of free trade in iron.

In 1740 only 17,350 tons of iron were produced in England, whereas some fifty years before the issue of the furnaces had

* Anderson, vol. iii., p. 88. † *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 217.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 279.

been reckoned at 180,000 tons.* It seems as though the English trade would soon have died out altogether but for the new impetus that came, partly from the introduction, in large quantities, of American, as well as foreign iron, but much more from the revival of Dud Dudley's old project for feeding the furnaces with coal instead of charcoal. That project had failed chiefly, hitherto, from the unfitness of the old-fashioned furnaces for the new kind of fuel. Coal and coke, burning slowly and with feebler chemical affinities for the iron ore, required its subjection to a much more powerful blast than could be obtained in the shallow furnaces then in use. At last the evil was remedied by young Abraham Darby, son of the Abraham Darby who, in 1709, founded the Coalbrook Dale Iron-works. 'Between 1730 and 1735, he determined to treat pit-coal as his charcoal-burners treated wood. He built a fire-proof hearth in the open air, piled upon it a circular mound of coal, and covered it with clay and cinders, leaving access to just sufficient air to maintain slow combustion. Having thus made a good stock of coke, he proceeded to experiment upon it as a substitute for charcoal. He himself watched the filling of his furnace during six days and nights, having no regular sleep, and taking his meals at the furnace-top. On the sixth evening, after many disappointments, the experiment succeeded and the iron ran

* Fairbairn, p. 283. These are the details of the produce of 1740, as given by Mr. Fairbairn :—

	Furnaces.	Tons.		Furnaces.	Tons.
Brecon	2	600	Nottingham	1	200
Glamorgan	2	400	Salop	6	2,000
Carmarthen	1	100	Stafford	2	1,000
Cheshire	3	1,700	Worcester	2	700
Denbigh	2	550	Sussex	10	1,400
Gloucester	6	2,850	Warwick	2	700
Hereford	3	1,350	York	6	1,400
Hampshire	1	200	Derby	4	800
Kent	4	400			
Monmouth	2	900		59	17,350

Annual average for each furnace, 294 tons, 1 cwt. 1 qr.
Weekly ,, ,, ,, 13 ,, 0 ,,

out well. He then fell asleep so soundly, in the bridg-house at the top of his old-fashioned furnace, that his men could not wake him, and carried him sleeping to his house, a quarter of a mile distant. From that time his success was rapid.' * From that time, moreover, began a new era in the history of English iron manufacture.

A few years later, in 1740, Benjamin Huntsman left Doncaster to settle in the neighbourhood of Sheffield. In his work as a clockmaker he had been troubled by the bad quality of the steel with which he had had to construct his springs and pendulums. Therefore he set himself, in his new home, to find out some better mode of making steel. 'He had not only to discover the fuel and place suitable for his purpose, but to build such a furnace and make such a crucible as should sustain a heat more intense than any then known in metallurgy. "Ingot-moulds had not yet been cast, nor were there hoops and wedges made that would hold them together.' † For a long time he failed. But in the end he overcame every difficulty, and brought the manufacture of cast steel very near to its present condition.‡

* Percy, *Metallurgy of Iron and Steel* (London, 1865), quoting an interesting memoir by Mrs. Darby.

† Smiles, *Industrial Biography*, p. 104.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 105. 'The process of making cast-steel,' says Mr. Smiles, 'as invented by Benjamin Huntsman, may be thus summarily described. The melting is conducted in clay-pots or crucibles manufactured for the purpose, capable of holding about 34 pounds each. Ten or twelve of such crucibles are placed in a melting furnace, similar to that used by brass-founders; and when the furnace and pots are at a white heat, to which they are raised by a coke fire, they are charged with bar steel, reduced to a certain degree of hardness, and broken into pieces of about a pound each. When the pots are all thus charged with steel, lids are placed over them, the furnace is filled with coke, and the cover put down. Under the intense heat to which the metal is exposed, it undergoes an apparent ebullition. When the furnace requires feeding, the workmen take the opportunity of lifting the lid of each crucible and judging how far the process has advanced. After about three hours' exposure to the heat, the metal is ready for "teeming." The completion of the melting process is known by the subsidence of all ebullition, and by the clear surface of the melted metal, which is of a dazzling brilliancy, like the sun when looked at with the naked eye on a clear day. The pots are then lifted out of their place, and the liquid steel

In the meanwhile the manufacture of crude iron was rapidly progressing. Having set up seven furnaces at Coalbrook Dale, Abraham Darby extended his work to Horsehay in 1754, and in 1756 the Horsehay furnaces alone produced upwards of twenty tons of iron a week, 'sold off, as fast as made, at profit enough.' * In 1760 a new blowing apparatus, consisting of large cylinders, with closely-fitting pistons, was substituted for the old clumsy bellows, by Smeaton, at the Carron Iron-works.† In 1766 the Craneges introduced a reverberatory or air furnace, by which, without any blast, the pig iron was made malleable and fit for the forge hammer;‡ and in 1783 Peter Onions, of Merthyr Tydvil, started the idea of a puddling furnace, wherein, with help of a current of air from beneath, the fire was left to act upon the metal until it was brought, as he said, 'into a kind of froth, which the workman, by opening the door, must turn and stir with a bar or other iron instrument, and then close the aperture again, applying the blast and fire until there was a ferment in the metal.' In that way the dross was got rid of, and the pure iron ready for the forge.§ At the same time Henry Cort was developing the same process at Gosport. In 1783 he patented a method of faggoting the bars and then passing them through rollers which pressed out the earthy particles and made the iron tough and fibrous. Next year, in a second patent, 'he introduced a reverberatory furnace heated by coal, and with a concave bottom, into which the fluid metal is run from the smelting furnace; and he showed how, by a process of puddling, while exposed to the oxidizing current of flame and air, the cast metal could be rendered malleable.' ‖ These inventions of puddling and rolling, soon aided by the application of Watt's steam-engine to mining operations, proved of immense

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is poured into ingots of the shape and size required. The pots are replaced, filled again, and the process is repeated; and the red-hot pots thus serving for three successive charges, after which they are rejected as useless.'

* Fairbairn, p. 11. † *Ibid.* ‡ Smiles, p. 115.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 116. ‖ Fairbairn, pp. 12, 13.

value. In 1860 upwards of eight thousand of Cort's furnaces were in operation in Great Britain alone, each one producing more iron in a week than could often be obtained with the old appliances in the course of a year.*

Other improvements in the various parts of iron manufacture were introduced in later years, the most important of all being the hot-blast process, patented by Mr. Neilson of Glasgow, in 1828. Hitherto all furnaces and forges requiring the use of bellows or any other blowing apparatus, had been fed with blasts of cold air, which absorbed much of the furnace's heat before they could act upon the metal. Mr. Neilson suggested the simple plan of heating the air at a separate fire, and then applying it to the iron, and the process has been found to give so much fresh power over refractory ores that from three to four times the old quantity of iron can be worked with the addition of only one-third more fuel.† A few years later as great a benefit was brought to another department of iron manufacture by Mr. Nasmyth's steam hammer, patented in 1840.‡ No hammer previously in use was one-tenth as powerful in operations requiring force, or one-tenth as manageable in operations of delicacy. Without it our finished engines, huge paddle-wheels and screw-shafts for ocean-steamers, and wrought-iron ordnance could hardly have been constructed.§ Later still, and likely to prove more important than any other invention bearing upon iron manufacture, is Mr. Bessemer's plan for converting the crude metal, by one simple process, into malleable iron and steel.

Under the stimulus of inventions like these and the yet greater stimulus of the demand from all departments of English manufacturing industry, and from all parts of the world, for ever increasing supplies both of crude iron and of

* SMILES, p. 120, quoting from the *Mechanics' Magazine*.

† FAIRBAIRN, pp. 14, 63–65. ‡ SMILES, p. 288.

§ An interesting memoir of the inventor is in SMILES, pp. 275–298; a concise description of the invention in FAIRBAIRN, pp. 132–137.

finished iron machines of all sorts, the iron trade has grown mightily during the last hundred years. In the years between 1740 and 1788 the produce of Great Britain had increased from 17,350 tons to 68,300 tons. By 1796 it had grown to 124,879 tons. In 1820 it was more than thrice, in 1827 more than five times, that quantity; and in 1857 it was found that 3,659,447 tons of pig iron had been produced from 9,573,281 tons of iron ore. The value of this pig iron was assessed at £12,838,560.* It is doubtful whether the produce of all the other countries in the world is worth as much.†

* Fairbairn, pp. 283–287, whence these details of the pig-iron manufacture of 1857 are extracted.

	Tons.
England :—	
Northumberland	63,250
Durham	284,500
Yorkshire	296,838
Lancashire	1,233
Cumberland	30,515
Derbyshire	112,160
Shropshire	117,141
North Staffordshire	134,057
South Staffordshire and Worcestshire	657,295
Northamptonshire	11,500
Gloucestershire	23,882
Somersetshire	300
Wales :—	
Flintshire and Denbighshire	37,049
Glamorganshire, anthracite districts	63,440
Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire, bituminous districts	907,287
Scotland	918,000
Ireland	1,000
Total produce in Great Britain and Ireland	3,659,447

† From the same useful work this rough estimate of the produce of various nations is taken :—

	Tons.		Tons.
Great Britain	3,000,000	Russia	200,000
France	750,000	Sweden	150,000
United States	750,000	Various German States	100,000
Prussia	300,000	Other countries	300,000
Austria	250,000		
Belgium	200,000	Total	6,000,000

It is to this development of its iron-trade that Great Britain mainly owes its commercial superiority over all other nations. By it have been made possible the vast establishments in which cotton, woollen, and linen goods, and a thousand other wealth-producing commodities are manufactured, the wonderful system of railways by which all these, and all the other articles, in an unmanufactured state, with which commerce has to do, are distributed over the country, and the no less wonderful system of ships and sailing-vessels by which our staples of trade are carried to all the quarters of the world, to be there exchanged for other goods required in the English market. To it especially is due the prosperity of those younger towns—young as towns, though old as villages—like Manchester and Liverpool, Glasgow and Dundee, Leeds and Bradford, Birmingham and Sheffield, which have grown like mushrooms and become strong as oaks, each to be the centre of a great and wealthy district, and which thus, by contrast at any rate, have thrown such older towns as Norwich and Bristol into something like insignificance.

These older towns, however, have shared in the prosperity. Bristol is no longer the rival of London, and the superior of every other trading town in the kingdom; but it is still a busy hive of industry. If Queen Anne's statement, that 'she never knew she was a Queen until she went to Bristol,' would now be truer of other towns, Bristol still can boast of merchant princes, famous alike for the enterprise with which they have forwarded their own welfare and that of their town and country, and for the munificence with which, having amassed great wealth, they have expended it.

Most notable of all among these men were William Miles and his son Philip. Somewhere near the year 1760—so the story goes—William Miles walked into Bristol with three halfpence in his pocket, and a resolution to use his ready wit and his strong arms in advancing his then very slender fortunes. Taking the first porter's job that he could meet with in the streets, he earned sixpence thereby. With fourpence he

managed to buy food enough for the day, and to find some sort of lodging for the night. Next day he earned more, and earning each day more than he spent, he worked on as a street-porter till he had saved a sum of 15*l.* With that he apprenticed himself for three years to a carpenter and joiner, and during those three years he earned some more money and gained some further experience by doing evening work for a small shipbuilder in the neighbourhood. He thus qualified himself, when his apprenticeship was over, for going out as ship's carpenter in a Jamaica merchantman. While in Jamaica he applied his little savings in buying a cask or two of sugar, for which he was allowed free passage to Bristol, and while there he managed to sell at a considerable profit. With the proceeds he procured a little stock of such articles as he thought there was the best market for in Jamaica. So he went on, from each voyage earning more money and enabling himself to carry on a larger traffic. Thus he came to be known on both sides of the Atlantic as a man of remarkable energy and honesty, and as soon as he had sufficient capital he settled down as a merchant in Bristol, with certainty of success. So well did he succeed that in 1795, when his son Philip John, then twenty-one years of age, proposed to marry a daughter of the Dean of Lismore, he was rich enough to hand him a cheque for 100,000*l.*, and so, it was said, to remove the opposition of the aristocratic clergyman to association with the family of a self-made man.*

Before that time, apparently in 1793, William Miles had taken his son into partnership with him as a West India merchant, dealing chiefly in sugars, which, with trade in African slaves, were then the staple of Bristol commerce. Their counting-house and warehouse were at No. 61, Queen Square. They also had a sugar refinery at Lewis

* I have given the story of William Miles's rise in life as it has come to me by verbal report, the only absolutely certain fact being that his son married the Dean's daughter in 1795.

Mead.* Of these sugar refineries there were in Bristol twenty, the largest being Miles's, in 1799; and in the same year there were seventy full-sized vessels, several of them having Miles for their owner, engaged in the West India trade.† In 1800 or 1801, the thriving merchant was rich enough to buy a leading partnership in the old banking-house of Vaughan, Baker, and Company, in Corn Street, which then came to be known as Miles, Vaughan, Miles, and Company, and occupied the foremost place in Bristol banking that it holds to this day.‡

William Miles was alderman in 1793. He lived at Clifton Down, and there, rich and honoured, died about the year 1805. In that year Philip John Miles's name stands alone as a merchant in Queen Square.§ In 1808 Philip bought Leigh Court, the old Elizabethan house in which Charles the First had been concealed after the battle of Worcester, and replaced it by a larger building.‖ He bought other estates in Somersetshire, and continued to draw large sums, larger every year, from the mercantile, manufacturing, and banking enterprises in which his father had embarked. In compensation for the damage done to the warehouse in Queen Square and its contents, during the Reform riots of 1831, he claimed 3,500*l.*, and subsequently he accepted 1,311*l.*, 19*s.*, as a compromise; the entire sum paid by the Corporation on that account being 68,208*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.*¶ He was too rich, however, to feel the loss. Spending his wealth in splendid ways, he died in 1848, leaving personal property valued at more than 1,000,000*l.*, of which 300,000*l.* went to the eldest of his eight sons, and 100,000*l.* apiece to each of the others.**

William Miles was not the only man who rose in Bristol

* *Bristol Guide and Directory for* 1794.
† *New Bristol Guide* (Bristol, 1799), p. 82.
‡ Matthews, *Directory for Bristol*, 1801.
§ *Bristol Triennial Directory*, 1805–1807.
‖ Burke, *Visitation of Seats*, p. 257.
¶ *The Riots of* 1831 (Bristol, 1833).
** *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1848, part ii., pp. 657, 658.

from a humble station to the dignity of a merchant prince. As conspicuous a man, of a generation later, was Conrad Finzel, a native of Frankfort. Finzel was born about the year 1790. He was in his teens when Napoleon became master of Frankfort, and he was one of the conscripts drawn to serve in the Imperial army. Having no liking for the work, however, he ran away with two other youths, proceeded to Hanover, and thence made passage in an open boat to Heligoland. There he found an English ship, which brought him to London. As he walked through the streets, knowing nothing of the language, and almost penniless, he had the good fortune to meet with some countrymen of his own, to whom he told his adventures, and of whom he asked advice as to his future movements. They were labourers in a sugar-refinery, and obtained work for him in the same establishment. There his ingenuity and industrious habits soon led to his advancement. For a few years he was second boiler in the London house. Then he proceeded to Bristol, to serve as principal refiner in a sugar-house belonging to the Savages, and in course of time to save money enough to enable him, in 1836, with a grocer named Davis for his partner, to set up a small sugar refinery in Counterslip.* On the site of that little building now stands the largest and busiest sugar refinery in the world, yielding a thousand tons of sugar every week, and giving constant employment to more than fifty large West Indiamen, under the management of Messrs. Finzel, Son, and Company.

Conrad Finzel was always a benevolent man, but his benevolence was more than ever apparent, after the year 1846, when his sugar-refinery was burnt down. "I then asked myself," he said, some time afterwards, in terms eminently characteristic of the man, "what Conrad Finzel had done to call for this chastening stroke from God; and, after thinking for some time, the truth flashed upon me. The Almighty had punished me because I had not given to

* Pryce. *Popular History of Bristol* (Bristol, 1861), pp. 607, 608.

His uses as He had blessed me. He had greatly increased my store, and I had only helped the poor in the same proportion as when I had little. Thus I deserved punishment, and God sent me this affliction to remind me of my duty; so, instead of giving so-and-so, I said, I will give one-third of my gains for the future. I have given them, and God has gone on blessing me." He gave freely to all sorts of charitable institutions, but most freely of all to the remarkable Orphan House established on Ashley Hill by his countryman, the Reverend George Müller. During some years, it was reckoned, his gifts thereto amounted to 10,000*l.* a year. When near his end, a friend once spoke to him of the misfortune that his death would prove to the institution. "What has the life of George Müller, or Conrad Finzel, or any one else," he answered, "to do with the Orphan House. It is God's work, and God will take care of it when there is not one of us left."*

In that temper Conrad Finzel lived and worked in Bristol for nearly forty years. He died at Wiesbaden, while on a visit to his native land, on the 21st of October, 1859.† To the last he refused to take any part in public affairs, save as a merchant and a merchant philanthropist.

* Pryce, pp. 611, 612.

† *Ibid.*, p. 607. From the same interesting memoir these further details of the good man's life are extracted:—"Not until he had been in Bristol nearly thirty years, and become rich, did he visit the land of his boyhood; but on becoming wealthy he determined to do so. On reaching his native village in Germany, with a beating heart he took the path which led to the cottage where he first saw the light. He lifted the latch and entered. The only inmate was a plain-spoken man about his own age. The worthy German-Bristolian asked the occupant of the house many questions as to his family, and expressed a deep interest in his relatives. "Had you a brother, then?" inquired Mr. Finzel. "Yes, I had," said the man, "but he went away, and is dead, I suppose." "When did you last hear of him?" inquired Mr. Finzel. "The last time we heard anything about him he was in England, at a place called Bristol." "How long is that since?" "Twenty or thirty years," was the reply. "And his name was——" continued Mr. Finzel. "Conrad," said the man, finishing the sentence. "Oh! I knew him," said Mr. Finzel. "I knew your brother well; worked in the same shop with him, slept with him, ate the same bread, drank the same drink."

"God gave me a faculty to be a good sugar-boiler," he said, when refusing the office of alderman, to which he had been elected; "but no turn or talent to be a town-councillor."*

The sugar-boiling faculty was so strong that for a long time it brought him, besides the profits of his own large establishment, some 10,000*l.* a year in royalties paid by other refiners for use of the vacuum pan and centrifugal vat for making crystals, which he had invented and patented.† The premises which he built in place of those burnt down in 1846 were constructed almost entirely of iron and stone, at a cost of about 250,000*l.*

Of the way in which the development of manufacturing energy has helped on the progress both of special districts, and of the whole of Great Britain, we shall have numerous other instances in future pages. We shall also find ample evidence of the benefits that have resulted from the extension of sound views on political and commercial economy, all tending to the establishment of that thorough and entire free-trade policy which we now possess in a tolerably perfect shape. The free-trade battle of the Plantagenet, Tudor, and Stuart periods was chiefly limited to domestic

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At this the man, little thinking who his brother's "companion" was, expressed the deepest interest in him, because of his knowledge of Conrad, and pressed for more information. At last, unable to disguise his emotions, the rich merchant exclaimed, "Do you not know me? I am Conrad, your brother!" We need not describe the joy there was in the village on the discovery of the lost one; but our story would lose its point did we not state that, before leaving the village, Conrad Finzel had settled annuities on his brother and every relative he could find in the neighbourhood. . . . . His personal habits were simple, without being self-denying. He was fond of music, and, like all his countrymen, a great smoker. When in Bristol, he dined usually at the Refinery, returned to his residence, which he built at great cost at Clevedon, at about four, and was immediately afterwards seen, regular as the day, in his Scotch cap on his strong cob starting for his ride of ten miles. Except during the months of January and February he bathed regularly in the sea, near his residence, every morning, his last bath for the winter being on Christmas Day.'

* Pryce, p. 610. † *Ibid.*

ground. The boldest merchant or politician never thought of admitting foreign traders to an equality with Englishmen in the English markets, by removing the heavy and arbitrary imposts set both upon the importation of foreign produce and upon the exportation of home-made or home-grown commodities. Few even ventured to think it wise or generous that all the subjects of the English Crown should have equal rights and privileges in trade. During several centuries the history of British commerce was principally a history of monopolies and legislative restrictions: towns fought with towns, trades with trades, and companies with companies for the possession of special powers or immunities. Each centre of manufacturing or productive industry and each convenient port obtained special charters from the Crown, and guarded them with ruinous jealousy. We have seen how the corporation of London sought to advance its trade by all sorts of arbitrary regulations, at one time limiting the stay of foreign merchants in the city, or its suburbs, to forty days, and confining them to certain parts; at another, fixing the tax to be paid on every boat-load of fish brought into Billingsgate market; at another, forbidding the Norwich clothiers to send their goods to Blackwell Hall; and one conspicuous relic of the old restrictive policy appears in the heavy charge still made for every ton of coals brought into the Thames,—a famous source of city wealth, though a grievous injury to the poor who thus are forced to pay so much more for their scanty store of fuel. Then there were all the trading guilds of mediæval times. Grocers—importers of large wares—and mercers—importers of small wares—leagued together for common protection and assistance, and soon every other class of tradesman, from the goldsmith and the fishmonger to the tailor and the apothecary, had its own guild or association, of which every one seeking to follow the trade must be first an apprentice, and then a qualified member. In the early stages of commerce these guilds were useful in promoting good fellow-

ship, and forming a strong body for mutual defence, both in carrying on foreign trade and in resisting the encroachments of city corporations and of greedy kings and ministers of state. But they soon proved burdensome, and partly to correct them, partly to meet the altered circumstances of civilization, fresh associations were incorporated. Of these the Society or Company of Merchant Adventurers was the most eminent under the Tudors. In Stuart times it was succeeded by a crowd of others, as the Muscovy Company and the Levant Company, the African Company and the Virginia Company, by far the most famous, influential and long-lived being the Company of Merchant Adventurers trading to the East Indies. But for such trading bodies, it may be that the vast colonial empire of Great Britain could never have been established. Two hundred years ago, few single and unprotected merchants would have dared to send their slender ships over seas of which buccaneers or the fleets of hostile nations were masters, and none would have succeeded in making permanent settlements, or organizing durable systems of traffic with the natives of distant barbarous countries. The manifest superiority, in these respects, of incorporated societies secured for them universal favour, and that favour kept many of them alive long after they might have been dispensed with. It is only a few years ago that the private and trading powers of the East India Company were finally removed, and then only after half a century of zealous opposition, in which strong party-feeling helped to strengthen the cause of commercial justice.

Now, however, it is generally admitted that all monopolies are injurious and unjust, and that there should be perfect equality and freedom in all trading enterprises among the whole body of Englishmen. "The only beneficial care," said Alexander Baring, in 1808, "that a government can take of commerce is, to afford it general protection in time of war, to remove, by treaties, the restrictions of foreign governments in time of peace, and cautiously to abstain

from any, however plausible, of its own creating. If every law of regulation, either of our internal or external trade, were repealed, with the exception of those necessary for the collection of revenue, it would be an undoubted benefit to commerce as well as to the community at large. An avowed system of allowing things to take their own course, and of not listening to the interested solicitations of one class or another for relief, whenever the imprudence of speculation has occasioned losses, would, sooner than any artificial remedy, reproduce that equilibrium of demand and supply which the ardour of gain will frequently derange, but which the same cause, when let alone, will as infallibly restore. The interference of the political regulation in these cases is not only a certain injury to the other classes of the community, but generally so to that in whose favour it is exercised. If too much sugar be manufactured in Jamaica, or too much cotton in Manchester, the loss of those concerned will soon correct the mischief; but, if forced means are devised to provide for the former, a temporary increase of demand, which cannot be permanently secured, a recurrence to that natural state of fair profit which is most to be desired, is artificially prevented by the very means intended for its relief. If the cotton manufacturer, on the other hand, is to have his imprudences relieved at the expense of those employed on linen, silk, wool, or other materials, the injustice as well as impolicy of such a remedy needs no illustration. The interest of the State consists in the prosperity of the whole; it is contrary to sound policy to advance one branch of trade beyond its natural limits, and still more to do so at the expense of others; and the only mode of ascertaining the limits of each is to leave them all alone."* "I maintain," said another champion of free-trade, Mr. Poulett Thomson, in an eloquent speech delivered in the House of Commons on the 14th of April, 1829, "I maintain, without fear of

* *Inquiry into the Causes and Consequences of the Orders in Council* (London, 1808), p. 133.

contradiction, that the very essence of commercial and manufacturing industry is freedom from legislative interference and legislative protection. Attempt to assist its course by legislative enactments, by fostering care, and you arrest its progress, you destroy its vigour. Unbind the shackles in which your unwise tenderness has confined it, permit it to take unrestrained its own course, expose it to the wholesome breezes of competition, and you give it new life, you restore its former vigour. Industry has been well likened to the hardy Alpine plant. Self-sown on the mountain side, exposed to the inclemency of the seasons, it gathers strength in its struggles for existence, it shoots forth in vigour and in beauty. Transplanted to the rich soil of the parterre, tended by the fostering hand of the gardener, nursed in the artificial atmosphere of the forcing-glass, it grows sickly and enervated: its shoots are vigourless, its flowers inodorous. In one simple word lies the soul of industry—competition. The answer of the statesman and the economist to his sovereign, inquiring what he could do to assist the industry of his kingdom, was, 'Let it take its own way.' Such is my prayer. Relieve us from the chains in which your indiscreet tenderness has shackled us—remove your oppressive protection—give us the fair field, we ask, and we demand no more. The talent, the genius, the enterprise, the capital, the industry of this great people will do the rest; and England will not only retain, but she will take a yet more forward place in the race of competition for wealth and improvement, which, by the nature of things, she is destined to run amongst the nations of the world."

Those anticipations have been fully realized. During the last quarter of a century the foreign commerce of Great Britain has been tripled in extent, amounting, for a population of thirty millions, to as much as the foreign commerce of France and the United States put together, with a population of more than seventy millions.* This has resulted

* So the case was tersely put by Mr. Gladstone in his Budget speech of

not only from the revolution that has in recent times been effected by abandonment of legislative interference in the internal trade of the country, but also, perhaps yet more, from the introduction of enlightened views upon all questions of trade with other nations. During the last hundred years the advocates of free-trade have been able to shift their

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the 2nd of May, in the present year, 1866. From the same speech I cannot help quoting this excellent illustration of the advantages resulting from removal of restrictive duties. Speaking of his project for annulling the impost on foreign timber, he said:—"The duty on timber is a very low duty, and that is the best which can be said in its favour. When a thing is bad, the best that can be said of it is that there is very little of it. In every other point of view the duty on timber is as bad as it can be. To begin with, it is a protective duty; to go on with, it is a duty on a raw material; and lastly, it is a material of which this country stands in great want, which is of such vast bulk, and which has to be brought such distances, that to continue the duty on it is the very essence and quintessence of political folly. The history of the consumption of timber in this country is rather remarkable. In 1811 the duty on timber was high, and the consumption was 417,000 loads. At that period, certainly a most ill-omened one for commercial legislation, the duties were further raised; and in 1814 the consumption had fallen as low as 218,000 loads. However, the growing wealth of the country brought about a gradual increase; and I now pass over a long period of years to the year 1841. Here I will beg the House to observe, that every reduction of duty which has been made has been answered by a more than corresponding increase in the import and use of this great and essential material. In 1841 the consumption of foreign and colonial timber was 829,000 loads. At that time the duty was reduced as follows: On foreign timber the duty was reduced from 56*s.* 6*d.* to 31*s.* 6*d.*, but the duty on colonial timber was reduced from 11*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.* The reduction only took place in October, 1842; but as early as 1843 the consumption had risen from 829,000 loads to 1,298,000 loads. In 1850 it had risen to 1,723,000 loads. The duty was then further reduced on foreign timber from 15*s.* down to 7*s.* 6*d.*; and 20*s.* on foreign deals was reduced to 10*s.* The consequence was, that by 1859 the consumption had advanced from 1,723,000 loads to 2,480,000 loads. In 1860, though the duty was then what is called a moderate duty, we went to work again, and further reduced the duty to what is called almost a nominal rate, namely, from 10*s.* and 7*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* and 1*s.* That was the occasion when a gentleman from the colonies, then member for Launceston, predicted inevitable ruin over the whole timber industry of New Brunswick and Canada. But the consequence has been that the consumption, which was in 1859 2,480,000 loads, has actually increased more than 50 per cent. in those six years, being now 3,700,000 loads. I think we have now only to complete the work by setting that trade entirely free."

battle-ground; and the transparent wisdom of their arguments has already gone far to remove all restrictions upon our commercial dealings with foreign countries. We have now found out that, if free trade is greatly to the advantage of every subject of the English commonwealth, it is no less advantageous to England at large and to every other member of the commonwealth of nations. This is chiefly due to the teaching of the political economists, most of all to the excellent doctrines set forth by Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, and by David Ricardo in the *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, which appeared in 1817. Practical statesmen and practical merchants, like Baring and Thomson, soon saw the force of those doctrines, and ably supported them. In 1820 the leading merchants of London took a memorable step, in which they were quickly followed by the merchants of nearly all the other great towns in the country, in petitioning Parliament for the abolition of all protective duties on articles of trade of alien nations. "Foreign commerce," it was urged by them, "is eminently conducive to the wealth and prosperity of a country, by enabling it to import the commodities for which the soil, climate, capital, and industry of other countries are best fitted, and to export, in payment, those articles for which its own situation is better adapted. Freedom from restraint is calculated to give the utmost extension to foreign trade and the best direction to the capital and industry of the country. The maxim of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, which regulates every merchant in his individual dealings, is strictly applicable, as the best rule for the trade of the whole nation. A policy founded on these principles would render the commerce of the world an interchange of mutual advantages, and diffuse an increase of wealth and enjoyments among the inhabitants of each state. Unfortunately, a policy the very reverse of this has been and is, more or less, adopted and acted upon by the government of this and every other country; each trying to exclude the

productions of the others, with the specious and well-meant design of encouraging its own productions; thus inflicting on the bulk of its subjects, who are consumers, the necessity of submitting to privations in the quantity or quality of commodities, and thus rendering what ought to be the source of mutual benefit and of harmony among states a constantly recurring occasion of jealousy and hostility. Nothing would tend more to counteract the commercial hostility of foreign states than the adoption of a more enlightened and a more conciliatory policy on the part of this country. And although, as a matter of diplomacy, it may sometimes answer to hold out the removal of particular prohibitions or high duties, as depending upon corresponding concessions by other states in our favour, it does not follow that we should maintain our restrictions in cases where the desired concessions on their part cannot be obtained. Our restrictions would not be the less prejudicial to our capital and industry, because other governments persisted in preserving impolitic regulations; and, upon the whole, the most liberal would prove to be the most politic course on such occasions."*

In the generation and a half that has elapsed since the preparation of that document, the views therein advocated have been steadily gaining ground, producing wonderful advantage both to the commerce of the country, and, through its commerce, to every one of its subjects.

* McCulloch, *Commerce*, an excellent article contributed to the *Library of Useful Knowledge* (London, 1831–1833), pp. 68, 69.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME MERCHANTS OF LIVERPOOL; ESPECIALLY THOMAS JOHNSON, BRYAN BLUNDELL, ARTHUR AND BENJAMIN HEYWOOD, AND THOMAS BENTLEY.

[1600—1800.]

For six centuries before the introduction of that traffic with America which has been the chief promoter of the wealth of modern Lancashire, Liverpool had some sort of a commercial history. Founded in Anglo-Saxon times, it had a well-fortified castle under William the Conqueror, and by a charter issued in 1173, Henry the Second ordered that the whole estuary of the Mersey should be for ever a seaport to which the men of 'Lyrpole,' on either side of the water, might come and return, freely and without obstruction, with their ships and merchandize.* That charter was confirmed by King John in 1207, and in 1229 Henry the Third made Liverpool a free borough, with a merchants' guild and house, and like liberties of tollage, passage, stallage, and customs to those enjoyed by the burgesses of London, Bristol, Hull, and other towns; no strangers being allowed to trade or settle in the town without sanction from the municipal authorities.†

At that time, and for long afterwards, however, Liverpool was one of the smallest chartered towns in England, the largest being small enough. In 1272 there were in it, it was reported, a hundred and sixty eight houses;‡ and in

* Baines, *Lancashire*, vol. ii., p. 57. † *Ibid.*, p. 59. ‡ *Ibid.*

1338, when all England furnished seven hundred vessels, with fourteen thousand mariners, for the prosecution of Edward the Third's war with France, only a single ship, if ship it could be called, and half-a-dozen sailors came from Liverpool.* In 1565, when Stow wrote his *Survey*, there were in the harbour twelve ships, with an aggregate burthen of 223 tons, and seventy-five men to guide them. All these sailors, however, can hardly have belonged to Liverpool. Its entire population numbered only six hundred and ninety, occupying a hundred and thirty-eight houses, scattered over seven streets.† Liverpool was thus actually smaller than it had been in 1278. But even then it was beginning to be known as a haunt of commerce. In 1524, before Stow was born, Leland declared that there was 'good merchandize at Lyrpole: much Irish yarn that Manchester men do buy is there, and Irish merchants come much thither as to a good haven.'‡ And Camden, writing in 1586, calls this 'the most convenient and most frequented passage to Ireland.'§ It was Humphrey Brooke, a merchant of Liverpool, who, two years later, gave to Queen Elizabeth's ministers the first intimation of the coming of the Spanish Armada; he having, he said, 'departed out of Saint John de Luc, in France, the day after the fleet set sail.'‖

Perhaps Humphrey Brooke was not the only Liverpool merchant who went on trading expeditions to the Continent; but the chief commerce of the town was still with Ireland. In former times Chester had been the principal market for Irish traders. Thither came the merchants of Dublin, Drogheda, Dundalk, Newry, Carlingford, and Waterford,

* London sent 25 ships with 662 men; Bristol, 24 ships and 600 men; Hull, 16 ships and 466 men; Portsmouth, 5 ships and 96 men.

† Chapel Street, Bank (now Water) Street, Tithebarn (now Moor) Street, Castle Street, Dale Street, Juggler (now High) Street, and Peppard (now Old-hall) Street. One of the houses in Castle Street was let for 4*l.* a-year, and two others were sold for 10*l.*—Stow, cited by Baines, *Lancashire*, p. 60.

‡ Leland, *Itinerary*, vol. vii., p. 44. § Camden, *Britannia*.

‖ British Museum, *Harleian MS.*, No. clxxxvi., p. 88.

with little shiploads of flax and provisions, to be exchanged for English and foreign manufactures. But as the ships grew larger and more numerous, the Dee became less navigable. Therefore the Chester merchants began to use Liverpool as their port, and, in consideration of the benefits derived from their patronage, soon claimed a sort of lordship over it. This relationship, at first helpful to the new town, soon proved irksome. Endless disputes arose between the traders of the two ports, and step by step the younger obtained its coveted freedom. In 1584, through the influence of the Lord Derby of that time, certain old privileges conferred on the merchant adventurers of Chester—which gave them a right to exclude from trade with Spain and Portugal all retail dealers who did not pay them a tax of twenty-five per cent. on all their imports—were withdrawn.* As late as 1602, however, the Chester people asserted that 'the town of Liverpool was but a creek of the port of Chester, and had always used to send their shipping to the port of Chester;'† and its emancipation was not even complete in 1626, when a new charter, making it a city, with James Strange, Lord Stanley, for its first Mayor, was conferred by needy Charles the First.‡

In 1634, Humphrey Chetham, the great merchant of old Manchester, when ordered to collect 498*l.* as ship money from the whole county of Lancaster, levied only 15*l.* from Liverpool, it being 'poor and, as it were, a-begging,' while Chester was made to contribute a round sum of 100*l.* But the foundations of its immense trade had already been laid. It was the chief market in the north-west quarter of England for the woollen, linen, and cotton goods brought from Manchester, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Blackburn, and other towns in the South Lancashire districts; from Kendal in Westmoreland, and from Wakefield, Halifax, Bradford, Leeds, and other parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Good stores of cut-

* Thomas Baines, *History of Liverpool*, (Liverpool, 1852), p. 246.
† Baines, *Lancashire* vol. ii., pp. 73, 74. ‡ *Ibid.*

lery and hardware were brought to it from Gloucester, Sheffield, Rotherham, Birmingham, and Walsall, with a large proportion of the little iron at that time procured from the mines in Sussex and the Forest of Dean. Larger quantities of iron were imported, chiefly by Liverpool merchants, from Biscay, in those days the most famous iron district in Europe; but the staple import of Liverpool was Irish flax.* In carrying these commodities to and fro, the townsmen found in 1618 employment for four-and-twenty ships, just twice as many as Stow had noted half a century before.†

Another half century found Liverpool one of the most promising towns in England. The Irish rebellion of 1641 led to the settling in it of a useful colony of Irish Protestants, and the plague and fire of London in 1665 and 1666 brought it further and greater assistance by encouraging many influential merchants, driven out of the capital, to carry their wealth and experience to the hopeful town in the north.‡ Favoured by Cromwell as the best highway to Ireland, and made of political importance by the great share taken by its leading men in the Commonwealth strife, it had the great good fortune of being directed by an excellent lord of the manor. 'It is of late,' wrote one who visited the town in 1673, 'at the great charge and industry of the family of the Moores, of Bank Hall, which family for some hundreds of years have had a large property therein, and at present combine chief lords and owners of the greatest share thereof, having divers streets that bear their name, entirely of their inheritance, which hath so enlarged the town, that its church, though large and good, is not enough to hold its inhabitants, which are many; amongst whom are divers eminent merchants and tradesmen, whose trade and traffic, especially into the West Indies, makes it famous, its situation

* For a more detailed account of Liverpool commerce in the sixteenth century, see BAINES, *Liverpool*, chapter viii.

† BAINES, *Lancashire*, vol. ii., p. 74.

‡ *The Moore Rental*, edited for the Chetham Society by Mr. THOMAS HEYWOOD (Manchester, 1847), pp. 76, 77.

LIVERPOOL IN 1680.

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affording in great plenty, and at reasonabler rates than in most parts of England, such exported commodities as are proper for the West Indies, as likewise a quicker return for such imported commodities, by reason of the sugar-bakers and great manufactures of cotton in the adjacent parts; and the rather for that it is found to be the convenientest passage to Ireland and divers considerable counties of England with which they have intercourse of traffic. Here is now erecting, at the public charges, a famous town-house, placed on pillars and arches of hewn stone, and underneath is the public exchange, for the merchants. It hath a very considerable market on Saturdays for all sorts of provisions and divers commodities, which are bought by the merchants, and hence transported as aforesaid.'*

The 'chief lord and owner' to whom Liverpool owed so much of its improvement at this time was Edward Moore, son of Colonel John Moore, notorious in Commonwealth times, and representative of one of the oldest and most honourable families in Lancashire, whose members were through four centuries and a half the principal landowners of Liverpool. He died in 1678, about five-and-fifty years of age. The full description of his property in Liverpool—that is, of nearly the whole town—which he drew up in 1665 for the guidance of his son and heir,† aided by a curious old picture of Liverpool drawn at about this time, gives a very fair notion of the appearance and condition of the town towards the close of the seventeenth century.

The Liverpool of two hundred years ago did not cover one fiftieth of the area of the modern town, and in that fiftieth there was room for pleasant gardens and wide, straggling fields. At the left-hand corner, looking at it from the banks of the Mersey, was the venerable Chapel of our Lady and Saint Nicholas, serving as parish church, with the school-house abutting it on the water's edge: and yet further to the left,

* Blome, *Britannia* (London, 1673).

† *Moore Rental.*

separated from it by open fields, and far beyond the limits of the picture, was Old Hall, the residence of the Moores. On the extreme right was the ancient castle, long since destroyed; and at some distance inland, adjoining Dale Street, stood Crosse Hall, the abode of one of the oldest and worthiest Liverpool families. At the other end of Dale Street, by the river side, and in the centre of the sketch, were the only two other large buildings then existing, the old Custom House on the right-hand side, and the old Tower on the left. Dale Street and Castle Street, which ran from the corner of Chapel Street to the old Castle, were then, as now, the busiest parts of Liverpool. In Castle Street, Moore had a horse mill. "God bless it," he said to his son; "a thing of great concernment to your estate." * Then he had a windmill of equal value in Dale Street; † and hard by was the Sugar House Close. "This croft stands on the left-hand side of Dale Street, and fronts the street for some twenty-seven yards. I call it the Sugar House Close because one Mr. Smith, a great sugar-baker of London, a man, as report says, worth 40,000*l.*, came from London on purpose to treat with me, and according to agreement he is to build all the front, twenty-seven yards, a stately house of good hewn stone, four storeys high, and then to go through the same building with a large entry, and there, on the back side, to erect a house for boiling and drying sugar, otherwise called a sugar-baker's house. The pile of building must be forty foot square. Then he is to encompass all his ground with a brick wall round. If this be once done, it will bring a trade of at least 40,000*l.* a year from the Barbadoes, which formerly this town never knew. This house, it is thought, will cost at least 1,400*l.*" ‡

Liverpool had no other building as large as that; but there were others that gave promise of future prosperity. The chief house in Castle Street belonged to Bailie Johnson, "one of the hardest men of the town," as Moore called him.

* *Moore Rental*, p. 51. † *Ibid.*, p. 68. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 78.

"He bought this without my consent," he adds, "and at last, for 40*l.*, I admitted him tenant, and charged him two lives. But within less than a year, I, making Phœnix Street, had occasion to use the little close which is now Widow Greton's back side, and he had the impudence to demand 60*l.* of me for that, when, in truth, it was worth but 10 shillings per annum, and the whole tenement was at least 18*l.* a-year which I let him have for 40*l.* Thus you may see that you must expect no mercy from such rogues; and therefore, in the name of God, make the best you can of your own. Remember," the document proceeds, in terms very indicative of the old landowner's forethought and perception of the real basis of Liverpool greatness, "there belongs a great close to this house, lying in Dale Street, which runs down to the Pool. If ever the Pool shall be cut so as shipping shall come up on the back of the town,"—as long since it has done, in the noblest series of docks ever constructed,—"then this will be a most especial place to make a street, the only piece of land you have. I charge you never lease it again, but reserve it for a street. This house in Castle Street of itself is worth 130*l.*, and the land in the fields 100*l.*, and the barn and close in Dale Street, all worth nobody knows what." * Moore was fully alive to the value of those parts of the town which have since been converted into docks, and their approaches. In Pool Lane, at the back of Bailie Johnson's house, were four closes. "These," said Moore, "may be the greatest concern you have in England; for if the Pool be made navigable, the shipping must lie all along those closes, and the trade will be all in them for the whole town. You may have building there worth far more than 20,000*l.*, if God send peace and prosper trade." †

Peace was sent, and trade advanced even more rapidly than the old landowner expected, but not as much to the advantage of his descendants as he wished. The most clear-headed and enterprising man, and the man who, though he

* *Moore Rental*, pp. 47, 48. † *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 81.

did not much for himself, did most for the welfare of Liverpool, was Thomas Johnson, son of the Bailie Johnson, who had gained possession of the house in Castle Street contrary to the wishes of Edward Moore.

We know little of the younger man's private history; of his father's we know next to nothing. Born at Bedford, somewhere near the year 1620, Thomas Johnson the elder is supposed to have gone to Liverpool, when he was fifteen or twenty years old, and there to have applied himself to trade. He grew rich and influential. In 1659 he was councilman, in 1663 he was Bailiff, and in 1670 Mayor. In 1677 he refused to take the oaths prescribed by Charles the Second's new charter, and therefore had to retire from the civic government; and on a motion for his readmission, in 1683, he was declared ineligible. A fresh charter, obtained from William the Third, in 1695, enabled him to take office again, and in October of that year he served as Mayor for fifteen days, soon resigning the post in honour of his son.*

That son was born between 1650 and 1660. In 1689 he held the office of Bailiff, and in 1695, when he succeeded his father as Mayor, he had come to be concerned in all the municipal affairs of Liverpool. He was also, even then, one of the leading merchants of the town, conspicuous among a little company of men, famous and influential in their day. The oldest of all was Richard Percival, Bailiff in 1651, Mayor in 1658, and for more than fifty years one of the most successful tradesmen of Liverpool. A zealous Puritan, he had aided Cromwell's soldiers with shipping—doubtless in other ways as well; and before his death, in 1700, at the age of eighty-four, had amassed a large fortune, to be yet further increased by his son, also a Richard and a merchant, and wasted by his grandsons. Then there were William

* *Moore Rental*, pp. 132, 143, 144; *The Norris Papers*, also edited for the Chetham Society by Mr. Heywood (Manchester, 1846), p. 48. For the valuable details contained in these volumes, as also for much help, privately given, towards an understanding of the commerce of old Liverpool, I am much indebted to Mr. Heywood.

Clayton, Mayor during Johnson's bailiffship in 1689, and his senior by about a dozen years, the greatest Liverpool ship-owner under Charles the Second, and proprietor of the oldest sugar refinery in Liverpool, built in Sugar House Close in 1676; William Cleveland, one of Johnson's most intimate friends; and Richard Houghton, his associate in trade, and his constant opponent in politics.

More memorable than most of these were the Norrises, sons of a Thomas Norris, who with his father and brother took a chief part in defending the royalist cause in Lancashire during the Civil Wars. He married a very remarkable woman, Katherine Garway, daughter of the Sir Henry Garway who was Governor of the Levant Company, Lord Mayor of London in 1639, and a stout champion of Charles the First all through the time of his troubles. Thomas and Katherine Norris had seven sons, four of them men of mark. Thomas, the eldest, was more of a country gentleman than a merchant. He was one of the members sent by Liverpool to the Convention Parliament of 1688, and to him is chiefly attributed the merit of having obtained from William the Third the charter of 1695, renewing the liberties, and greatly advancing the interests, of Liverpool. His brother William had his own fortune to make, and therefore lived a more eventful life. He succeeded his brother as Member of Parliament in 1695; and in 1699, in consequence of his connection with the Garways, he was sent by the English East India Company as ambassador to Aurungzebe, with instructions to do his best towards advancing the interests of his employers and damaging the position of the other companies trading in the east. Edward, a younger brother, went as his secretary. William failed in his misson, and died of overwork; but the journey was in some respects profitable. Edward came home in 1701 with a richly-laden vessel, containing 60,000 rupees' worth of property belonging to the Company, and treasure amassed by his brother to the amount of 87,000 more rupees. After that he seems to have

settled down as a Liverpool merchant, Member of Parliament, and municipal reformer. But of all the brothers the most active in Liverpool matters was Richard, the youngest. Ten or twelve years younger than Thomas Johnson, and his close friend through life, he was Bailiff in 1695, Mayor in 1700, Member of Parliament from 1708 to 1711, and Sheriff of Lancashire in 1718.*

Half our knowledge of Johnson's history is derived from the extant correspondence between him and Richard Norris. It covers only five or six years, beginning with the autumn of 1700; but those five or six years were the most important in Johnson's life, and began a new stage in the history of Liverpool.

From the first letter we learn that Johnson was in London in November, 1700, busied about all sorts of trade concerns, but chiefly, as it seems, about a great cheese squabble of that time. About the year 1644 trade in cheese had become important in Liverpool, shipments of it being made thence to all parts of Europe as well as to the colonies in the New World. Soon the members of the corporation, anxious to fill their exchequer, levied town and port dues, amounting to sixteen pence a ton on all cheese shipped in the Mersey. Against this heavy charge the cheesemongers of London petitioned King and Parliament, and on account of it did their best to prevent the granting of William the Third's charter in 1695. In that year, also, the Lord Mayor of London wrote to the Liverpool corporation, urging a more moderate assessment. But the town authorities were resolute. They made answer that "they had 1,000*l.* to spend, and the cheesemongers might take their course at law;" and they were as good as their word, save that they did not suffer the law to take its course. Litigation lasted till 1700, and then an Exchequer judgment being against them, no one was able for some time to serve a process on the corporation,

* *Norris Papers, passim*; BRUCE, *Annals of the East India Company*, &c.

'by reason of the menaces to any that should serve them with it; and being at length served on them by an attorney of the town, they caused him to be suspended of his practice in their town, and forced him to send for a *mandamus* to be restored.' The suit was not ended till the autumn of 1700, when Johnson came to assist in the transaction.*

He left London at the end of November. "I am ill wearied of this place," he wrote to Norris on the 14th; "but being daily in expectation of oak stays me. I do not find that the death of the King of Spain makes any alteration in trade. Oils by little and little are advanced. I suppose ere this Mr. Clayton hath his tobacco."†

In buying cheese, oil, and timber for the Irish and north of England markets, and in procuring tobacco from Virginia for sale both at home and on the Continent, Johnson found plenty of employment in Liverpool. But the zeal that he showed on behalf of all local concerns, induced his townsmen to keep him often out of it. In December, 1701, he was elected Member of Parliament in succession to Sir William Norris,‡ William Clayton being his fellow member, and he held his seat in three successive Parliaments, until the year 1721.

All through his Parliamentary career he acted honestly and with dignity, erring often, perhaps, in showing too much devotion to the interests of his own town and similar centres of new and rapidly improving commerce, but doing his best to promote the general welfare of the country and secure for it an honourable place among the nations of Europe. During twenty years he voted steadily with the Whigs, save on one occasion, when their participation in an especially flagrant job compelled him to add his weight to the opposition raised by the Tories.§ From first to last he seems to have held aloof, as far as he was able, from the jealousies and selfishnesses then rife in Court and Govern-

* *Norris Papers*, p. 30.
† *Ibid.*, p. 49.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 74.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

ment. "These contending parties," he said in one letter, written on the eve of Queen Anne's accession, "make the kingdom uneasy. We are sure an unhappy people, and purely occasioned by the pride of ambitious men."* "There is no preaching up good husbandry," we read in another; "all the managers are agreed, some to keep places and some to get new. The poor country hath lost all her friends. To see how men are changed is worth observation."† "I am troubled," he wrote, a few months later, too angrily to express himself logically, although his meaning is clear, "I am troubled to see men that I know made the greatest noise about their constitution and the hardships of the people of England—and now these people can do anything. Here is a gloomy change in men, but no more than I expected; I think I told you so before, I find it more and more every day."‡ "God help the country," we read once more; "we are but in a miserable condition. God Almighty open the eyes and hearts of the Commons, that they may be able to discern and know who are for the interest of their country; nothing but pride reigns amongst these courtiers."§ Thus thinking, Johnson appears to have steadily voted, and spoken when need arose, on behalf of the national honour. A liberal himself, all we know of his movements in the House of Commons shows him to have been a constant advocate of civil and religious liberty. "I hope I shall be able to answer anything that may be alleged against me," he said, in reply to some who accused him of lukewarmness in his advocacy of toleration for dissenters, "and do heartily wish all men's votes were this sessions printed, that gentlemen would be better able to judge."‖

About his work in Parliament, however, we have very little information. It is probable that he took no prominent part in the discussion of the general business of the nation. It was hardly expected that he should do so. The welfare

* *Norris Papers*, p. 78. † *Ibid.*, p. 80. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 103.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 124. ‖ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

of the State was left much more in the hands of the sovereign and his ministers than would now-a-days be thought possible, and for approval of their measures they looked far more to peers and county members than to the delegates of towns and cities. Least of all were the representatives of new ports and centres of commercial and industrial life supposed to trouble themselves about general politics. They were sent to look after the special interests of the class that elected them, and according to their success therein they were praised or blamed. No man, viewed in this light, could be more praiseworthy than Thomas Johnson. An active merchant and a devoted friend to his native town, he made it his chief business to promote the commercial and municipal importance of Liverpool. And he did this wonderfully well, both by his speech and vote in Parliament and by the personal assistance and advice that he gave on all points of local interest. "I long to be amongst you," he said, in a letter to Norris, dated March, 1702; "but the land tax and salt prevents me."*

Salt, from the Cheshire mines, was already taking an important place in Liverpool commerce, and Johnson had to labour at protecting it from the heavy taxation by which the Government, for the furtherance of its foreign warfare under Marlborough, obtained money from the trading towns, just as it appropriated much of the whole country's wealth by means of land taxes as heavy. The national debt was then a new and mistrusted institution. "When upon the Revolution," says Davenant, the financial critic of the time, "the Parliament fell most willingly into the war, as a thing made absolutely necessary by the enemy, espousing King James's interest, the first branch of our expense was carried on in the common mode of levying taxes, and the money required for every year's expense was raised and paid within the year. The nation was rich, trade prodigiously great, paper credit ran high, and the goldsmiths in Lombard Street commanded

* *Norris Papers*, p. 90.

immense sums. Land-taxes, polls, additional duties of customs, excises, and the like, were the ways and means by which these things were done." It was certainly better for each season to meet its own expenses than for the wealth of the future to be forestalled; but in the struggle for money, it was natural that each class of the community should strive to get the chief burthen laid upon its neighbours. Therefore Johnson argued for as low an excise as possible on salt.

But tobacco was at that time the chief staple of Liverpool; and Johnson took much greater interest in the mode and extent of its taxation. In the ten years from 1700 to 1709, the average annual importation of this commodity from Virginia amounted to 12,880 tons, 7,857 tons for re-shipment to other countries, and 5,023 tons, about two-thirds of the quantity now used by a population thrice as large, for home consumption.* Half the shipping and a great deal more than half the wealth of Liverpool were engaged in the trade.†

No other town in England had so large a share in it; while perhaps no other merchant was as energetic and influential as Thomas Johnson. He used his influence and showed his energy in ways very characteristic of the times. Great jealousy, it seems, was felt by the traders of other ports at the rapid growth of Liverpool. This jealousy led to the careful showing up of practices that would be very blameworthy were they not almost universally adopted a century and a half ago. Even now-a-days tender-conscienced and strictly honourable people see no harm in smuggling. Under Queen Anne and the early Georges, nobody, save Ministers and excisemen, and they only where private interests did not clash with public duties, had any scruples about it. The commercial classes resented the determination of men like Robert Walpole to lay the whole burden of taxation upon manufactured and imported goods, to the relief of land and agricultural produce. Hence the merchants of Liver-

* Chaik, vol. ii., p. 153. † *Norris Papers*, p. 81.

pool united in a wholesale system of smuggling, and thereby mulcted the Exchequer of very large sums of money. The fraud—if that can be called a fraud in which none but a very few whose honesty was far in advance of their times saw anything fraudulent—was practised in two ways. Whenever it could be done, tobacco was brought slily into the kingdom, without paying any duty at all. When that was not possible remission of duty was claimed for great quantities, on the plea that it was damaged and unmarketable. We are not enlightened as to the precise modes of peculation resorted to, but it is clear that peculations of all sorts were easy, so long as Members of Parliament, acting for their corporations, had the appointment of all local custom-house officers. There can be no doubt that most of the officers were parties to the objectionable practices; and those who would not act with the merchants had to be hood-winked. "Good sir," wrote Johnson to Norris on one occasion, "manage this thing prudently, so as not to be played with; for if such a thing come to the custom-house officers' ears, it will destroy us."*

Johnson made no secret, among friends at any rate, of his participation in the business. It was the cause of frequent dispute between him and his fellow-member, William Clayton, who, though as great a smuggler as the rest, decried it for the sake of gaining influence with the Ministry. He professed to be specially anxious that all casks of tobacco intended for the foreign market, nearly two-thirds of the whole supply, should be sent out just as they were imported, 'without alteration in the cask, mark, or number,' so as to prevent any tampering with the contents, or any fictitious claiming of abatement on account of damage. "I told him all our allowances were at an end, if one such practice was on foot," wrote Johnson to his friend; "and then where was our trade? We might have one such as the country would admit of but we could not expect to supply those parts we now do."†

* *Norris Papers*, p. 82. † *Ibid.*, p. 81.

That was in the spring of 1702. In October, while Johnson was in Liverpool, two fresh custom-house officers were sent down from London to look after the local inspectors, and see that the public interests were cared for. "They put all the Pill-garlics into a cold sweat," writes Peter Hall, Johnson's brother-in-law. Johnson and some eight or ten others, however, took them in hand, "and continued a very sharp dispute about the nature of tobacco, especially such as deserved damage. They said they would not allow in any that was damaged before brought into this country, as house-burnt, sea-burnt, chaff, etc. With much ado we have brought them tolerably to stand on their feet, and hope in a few days to learn them to go." And a week later he adds, in terms that make us suspect something like bribery had been used, "We have now clearly gained our point with the surveyors, who are honest, rational, and ingenuous men. They were big with expectation at first, and treated us, as they believed us to be, robbers; but our light now shines in darkness, and there is not one word to be believed that was spoken by the poor devils. They declare that they find us to be an honest, industrious people, and that we deserve encouragement. They have looked at several of Mr. Johnson's hogsheads, who was chiefly complained against, and find everything in our favour."* But the surveyors seem not to have spoken quite as favourably in London as they had done in Liverpool. Johnson says that they went about gossiping against the persons who had just entertained them, alleging that 'Mr. Houghton had a fine house, and kept good wine, but we all lived frugally;' that 'Mr. Clayton had a fine house, but it was not furnished,' and the like. "Now I suppose these gentlemen thought we did not make enough of them," says Johnson. "When they come again we shall know better how to deal with them. We are sadly envied, God knows, especially the tobacco trade at home and abroad."†

There was some excuse for the envy felt by strangers at the

* *Norris Papers*, pp. 99, 100. † *Ibid.*, p. 114.

prosperous trade of Liverpool; but it would be tedious to track the whole history of Johnson's share, crooked and straightforward, in its promotion. There is more to interest us in the share he took in all the local improvements made necessary by the growth of commerce in the town. "Sir," he said, in a letter to Norris, dated the 17th of March, 1702, "I am told Mr. Mayor continues to alter the corn-market. With submission, I think Castle Street is the properest place for it; the stones are there laid, and there's room enough to unload the carts. Methinks it's against the interests of the corporation to draw all the market to a beggarly part of the town. I would propose, and I hope it will look fair, that the butchers be at the new market; the butter, cheese, and poultry about the 'Change, as the butchers were; the corn-market as formerly; the yarn-market, shoe-market, and potatoes at the White Cross."* "I think a handsome square might be made very well," he wrote, five years later, on the 5th of April, 1707, when there was discussion as to what should be done with a piece of vacant ground adjoining Castle Street; "but then you should let it to people that would build good houses and make them uniform; and as the custom is here not to let to any that open shops, I do hope it may be built by merchants, or such private families. This would be a mighty ornament to the town."† Therefore Saint Peter's Square was built on part of the site of the old Castle, with handsome dwelling-places that were in time replaced by shops and warehouses when that part of Liverpool came to be used exclusively for business purposes.

Liverpool Castle, after some five centuries of substantial existence, having proved a disagreeable stronghold of the Commonwealth cause, had been partly demolished, soon after his accession, by Charles the Second. For some thirty years the bare walls, half broken down, were left standing, until the ruins ceased to be even picturesque. Then, near the

* *Norris Papers*, p. 80. † *Ibid.*, p. 159.

end of the seventeenth century, it was resolved to clear the ground altogether, and put it to practical use. Many influential men, Thomas Johnson among them, were anxious to build on it a church. In 1699 they petitioned Parliament for leave to make Liverpool an independent parish, with a Parish Church in addition to the old Chapel of Saint Nicholas and our Lady, till then its only place of worship. "Liverpool was formerly a fishing village," they urged; "but has now the third part of the trade of England, and pays upwards of 50,000*l.* *per annum* to the King. And by reason of such increase many new streets are built and still in building; and many gentlemen's sons, of the counties of Lancaster, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, and North Wales, are put apprentices in the town. And there being but one chapel, which doth not contain one-half of our inhabitants, in the summer—upon pretence of going to the Parish Church, which is two long miles, and there being a village," apparently Kirkdale, "in the way—they drink in the said village, by which and otherwise many youths and sundry families are ruined. Therefore it is hoped the Bill may pass, being to promote the service of God."* The Bill did pass, and the building of Saint Peter's Church was begun as soon as possible, no one taking greater interest in the work, or helping it on more, than Johnson. "Good sir," he wrote to Norris, at the end of 1701, almost as soon as he had proceeded to London to commence his parliamentary duties, "forward the raising money for the church in time. It is a shame,"†—a shame, we presume, that people did not subscribe quickly enough. "Our new church goes on well," he wrote in June, 1713; "we now agree to seat it with oak."‡ And in the September following we find him writing to Norris: "Please to inquire what we can have your black and white marble for per stoop or yard, proper to lay in the chancel. We shall want as much as will lay about forty yards. But we would know the charge before we engage,

* *Moore Rental*, p. 77. † *Ibid.*, p. 77. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

lest it be too large for us. We have ordered the black flag from the Isle of Man to lay the aisles with; it will be much better than our common flags."* There are other notes extant, showing what deep interest Johnson took in the building of his Parish Church.

At the same time he was interested in other building of much more commercial importance. This was the construction of the Old Dock, the oldest dock in the kingdom. Towards the improvement of the shipping capabilities of Liverpool all its intelligent traders had been striving for many years past. In 1694 Thomas Patten, of Bank Hall, Warrington, a merchant of some note in his day, widened the Mersey and made it passable from Runcorn to Warrington. "Since I made the river navigable to Warrington," he wrote in 1701, "there have been sent to and from Liverpool 2,000 tons of goods a year, and I believe as much by land, which if the river above Warrington were cleared of wears, would all go by water; for the river to Manchester is very capable of being made navigable at a very small charge. And this would encourage the tradesmen in Manchester, Stockport, Macclesfield, Congleton, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, and some parts of Yorkshire and Staffordshire to come to Liverpool and buy their goods, instead of going to Chester, Bristol, or London. The carriage would be easy and cheap. I think it would nearly double the trade of Liverpool."†

The trade of Liverpool has been a good deal more than doubled thereby. But much more important than these plans for the improvement of inland navigation were the measures by which sea traffic was advanced. The insufficiency of the Mersey as a harbour for shipping was a chief cause of the insignificance of Liverpool down to Johnson's time. The Thames, without any artificial appliances, afforded a safe resting-place for all the ships that needed to come to London; Bristol had the junction of the Avon and the Frome, and Plymouth its excellent bay; Hull the basin of the Humber

* *Norris Papers*, p. 129. † *Ibid.*, p. 37.

and the Hull, and Newcastle the bed of the Tyne. These were the chief ports of England, until Johnson and his friends determined to provide Liverpool with a better artificial harbour than came to any of them through natural causes.

About the beginning of the enterprise we are told very little. A sort of experiment was made in the partial excavation of the Old Dock in 1699, and the 8th of June, 1700, is named as the day on which it was first used; but the real work was not entered upon till some eight years later. The project was repeatedly discussed in the Corporation, and each year found a growing inclination to adopt the suggestion made long before by Edward Moore, and convert the Pool into a place to which ships might resort. All grants of land in that neighbourhood made by the Corporation were conditional on the construction of a dock; and in 1701 it was resolved that 'the town is to build a bridge over the intended canal.' At length, in 1708, when the Corporation found that it was possessed of an income of about 1,200*l.* a year, and that the port was frequented by some three hundred and fifty ships, eighty-four of which, averaging seventy tons apiece, and manned by about nine hundred sailors in all, were Liverpool property, it resolved to make a fair beginning of the work. On the 3rd of November, in that year, the municipal authorities ordered 'that Sir Thomas Johnson and Richard Norris, esquires, the representatives in Parliament of the Corporation, being now going to Parliament, be desired and empowered to treat with and agree for a person to come to the town and view the ground and plan of the intended dock.'*

Mr. Thomas Steer was the engineer selected for the work, and in accordance with his plans a bill was presented to Parliament by Johnson and Norris. Thereupon arose a hot discussion. The promoters of the bill represented that in the harbour of the Mersey the water, at the time of spring-tides, rose to thirty feet, while at neap its height was only fifteen feet, and that the shore was so level that there was

* Baines, *Liverpool*, p. 344.

between three and four hundred yards' distance between high and low water mark. The current was strong and rapid, and the harbour was very much exposed to westerly winds and tempestuous weather. Ships had either, at low water, to lie aground on a rock covered with a thin and treacherous coating of sand, or to go out into the channel, there to be beaten about with the likelihood of shipwreck within sight and hearing of the townsmen. Each course was very dangerous, besides leaving only two or three hours a day for loading and unloading; and trade suffered greatly by all these risks and delays. Therefore it was proposed to construct a dock, four acres in extent and large enough to hold a hundred vessels, with a depth of at least fourteen feet at low water, and room at spring-tides for the largest man-of-war. Quays, wharves, and warehouses were to surround it. The whole cost of the undertaking was estimated at 10,000*l.*, and this money the corporation of Liverpool proposed to raise by a tonnage upon all vessels using the docks. They asked the sanction of Parliament to their project, on the ground that it would not only be very helpful to the general trade of the nation, but also be of extraordinary service to Her Majesty's ships of war, there being no convenience of a dock in all the channel, or any nearer than Plymouth Harbour.

Much opposition was, of course, made to the proposal—especially by the cheesemongers of London, who thus revived their old grudge against the merchants of Liverpool—on the score of its novelty and doubtful utility. At any rate, it was urged, if the Liverpool men were allowed to make their experiment they should do it at their own risk, and not burden merchants of other towns with the expense. Parliament, however, decided that Johnson's scheme was very reasonable and greatly to the advantage of the nation. Early in 1709 an act was passed authorising the collection of dock dues at rates varying from two pence to eighteen pence a ton on all goods imported or exported, and empowering the Corporation to raise 6,000*l.* on

mortgage of shore dues, reckoned to bring in about 600*l.* a year.*

The work was formally begun in December, 1709, by a grant of 500*l.* from the Corporation; but its novelty, bringing difficulties and expenses not calculated for, caused it to spread over many years. In 1717 the commissioners appointed for its execution reported that they had spent all the 6,000*l.* assigned to them, and in addition 5,000*l.* of their own money, and that now the business was delayed for want of funds. Permission was accordingly granted by George the First for the borrowing of a further sum of 4,000*l.* With that assistance the Old Dock—the oldest dock in England—was completed.† It soon became too small for the wants of the town. Other docks were built one after another, to become the wonder of modern travellers; and the Old Dock, falling into disuse, was at length filled up to make room for the new Custom House of Liverpool. A tourist, writing in 1727, declared that 'in his first visit to Liverpool, in 1680, it was a large, handsome, and thriving town; at his second visit, ten years later, it was become much bigger; but at his third visit, in 1726, it was more than double its bigness of the said second visit; and it is still increasing in people, buildings, wealth, and business.'‡ And in 1761 we find writers averring that "Liverpool, in point of a vastly extended foreign commerce and mercantile shipping, is long since become undoubtedly the greatest and most opulent sea-port in the kingdom, next after London and Bristol; probably employing about three hundred sail of her own, greater and lesser shipping, mostly in the Guinea and American trades, and is now said to be thrice as large and populous as it was at the accession of the late King William and Queen Mary to the Crown."§ Liverpool was

* Baines, pp. 345–349. † *Ibid.*, pp. 400, 401.

‡ *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, cited by Anderson, vol. iii., p. 143.

§ Anderson, vol. iii., p. 325

then not thrice but seven or eight times as large and populous as it was in 1688; and during the last hundred years it has become nearly ten times as extensive as it was in 1761,—ten times over and over again, if we reckon as parts of it the outlying districts that have been made prosperous by its prosperity.*

Of all this Thomas Johnson must be regarded as the chief promoter. In 1707, in consideration of his great services to Liverpool, he was knighted by Queen Anne; but it was sorely against his will. "This day," he wrote from London on the 10th of March, "half an hour past 12, or near 1, I went to the House of Lords to know when the Lord Derby would please to present the Corporation address; upon which my Lord told me when the Queen came to the House in the Princess's Chamber, and desired I would stay. Upon which, Mr. Pool with me, I did stay the Queen's coming; and after the Queen returned from the House, the Lord Derby carrying the sword, he presented the address. And I being there, the Lord Derby, against my knowledge, spoke to the Queen to confer the honour of knighthood. God knows I knelt to kiss the Queen's hand, and to my great surprise the other followed. I am under great concern about it, knowing I no way desired that I had, and must undergo a great many censures; but the Lord forgive them as I do. I had not mentioned this thing; but I know you'll have it by others, though of no information of mine, and I am sure the surprise has put me more out of order than I have been since I came to London. This, I am satisfied,

* This epitome of the population returns shows how Liverpool has grown during the last three half-centuries; the first being the chief period of the tobacco trade; the second, of the African slave trade; the third, of the cotton trade:—

1700	5,715	1760	25,787	1811	94,376
1710	8,168	1770	35,600	1821	118,972
1720	11,833	1777	34,107	1831	205,572
1730	12,071	1786	41,600	1841	286,487
1742	18,000	1790	55,732	1851	376,065
1752	18,500	1801	77,708	1861	437,710

was an effect of my Lord's kindness; but I could not forbear telling my Lord I could not thank him."*

That characteristic letter shows how highly Johnson was esteemed in his day. It also shows that, as far as worldly prosperity went, he himself shared but slightly the benefits that he conferred upon Liverpool. Too much of a patriot to pay proper heed to his own concerns, he seems never to have been very rich, and to have grown poor as he advanced in years. On his father's death in August, 1700, the house in Castle Street and the closes in Dale Street, of which we found mention in old Edward Moore's Rental, descended to him, along with another house in Water Street, and an estate in Ford;† but these bequests were burdened with heavy legacies, and added little to his wealth. In 1707 he was too poor to desire the honour of knighthood, or to know how to support it with dignity; and in 1722, after faithful work for Liverpool in three successive Parliaments, his re-election was declared invalid in consequence of a petition from Sir Thomas Booth showing that, not being a landowner worth 300*l.* a year, he did not possess the requisite qualification. He never disputed the statement; but at once retired from Parliament. He left Liverpool and England in the following January. He went to take a custom-house officer's place on the Rappahannock in Virginia, at a salary of 80*l.* a year; and there, or somewhere in the New World, he died a short time previous to May, 1729.‡ Liverpool, just beginning the full enjoyment of the good influences that he had exerted on its behalf, had almost forgotten him in his lifetime, and in later days his memory has been so slighted, even by the special historians who have attempted to trace the origin and growth of the town, that his name is hardly ever mentioned.

But Liverpool has not been able to forget the name of another of its early benefactors, a generation younger than

* *Norris Papers*, p. 170. † *Moore Rental*, p. 144.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 144; *Norris Papers*, p. 48.

Sir Thomas Johnson. Bryan Blundell was born somewhere near the year 1685. Left an orphan at an early age, he had to fight his own way in the world; and by 1709 he had won for himself a position of some influence. He was master of a ship engaged in foreign trade, which either was his own property, or afforded him opportunities of engaging in occasional business for himself, and so of getting together a little heap of money. In that year, the year when the Old Dock began to be built, he agreed with the Rev. Robert Stithe, one of the clergymen of the Parish Church, to found a charity school, partly with their own money, partly by help of subscriptions from their friends. Setting to work at once, they collected enough to form a fund yielding 60*l.* or 70*l.* a year. That done, they built a school-house for 35*l.* and placed therein fifty children, whom they clothed and taught during the day-time, leaving them to be kept by their parents. Stithe was appointed treasurer; "and I," says Blundell, in a record of his work in this cause, "went to sea on my employment, telling Mr. Stithe that I hoped to be giving him something every voyage for the school." In four years he did give 250*l.* Then, in 1713, good Mr. Stithe died, and his successor in the church showed no inclination to carry on his charitable work; "which gave me much concern," writes Blundell. "I therefore determined to leave off the sea and undertake the care of the school, and was chosen treasurer in 1714; at which time there was 200*l.* at interest, which was all the stock the school had. In a little time I saw some of the children begging about the streets, their parents being so poor as not to have bread for them; which gave me great concern, insomuch that I thought to use my best endeavours to make provision for them, so as to take them wholly from their parents, which I hoped might be promoted by a subscription. I therefore got an instrument drawn out for that purpose on parchment, went about with it to most persons of ability, and many subscribed handsomely. On the strength of which I went to work and got

the present charity school built, which has cost between 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.*, and was finished in 1718, at which time I gave for the encouragement of the charity 750*l.*, being one-tenth of what it pleased God to bless me with, and did then purpose to give the same proportion of whatever he should indulge me with in time to come, for the benefit and encouragement of the said charity. So great has been the mercy and providence of God in prospering me in business that I have made up the 750*l.*," he said, writing in 1751, "to 2,000*l.*, which I have paid to the use of the school, and my children, six in number, the youngest of them now near thirty years of age, are so far from wanting or being worse for what I have given to the school, that they are all benefactors to it, some of them more than 100*l.* at a time; I may truly say, whilst I have been doing for the children of the school, the good providence of God hath been doing for mine."

It was certainly a happy thought that led honest Bryan Blundell to abandon the sea and settle down as a Liverpool merchant. Not only was he able to establish the most important local charity to be found in the borough, but he thus, securing the double blessing attendant on the quality of mercy, made for himself and his offspring an honourable place among the great men of Liverpool. He became an enterprising merchant, an influential townsman, and a great promoter of every sort of good work. He was Mayor in 1721, and again in 1728. He had stately ships of his own trading with Africa, with North Carolina, Jamaica, and Nevis, as well as other parts of North America and the West Indies. But he never forgot his charity school. In 1726 he procured its enlargment, so as to admit ten more children, and in 1735, all the sixty, hitherto only partially boarded, were taken altogether out of their parents' hands. In 1742, ten more were added, and in 1748 the number was raised to a hundred, seventy of them being boys and thirty girls. "The charge is now," he said, three years later, "700*l.* per annum, towards which we have, by the blessing of God,

attained to a stock or income of 400*l.* a year. The other 300*l.* comes in by gifts and legacies, so that we have never yet wanted at the year's end, but always continue increasing a little. I have now been treasurer thirty-seven years, in which time more than four hundred children have been put out apprentices, mostly to sea, in which business many of them are masters and some mates of ships. Several of them are become benefactors to the school and useful members of society. We take the children into the school at eight years of age, and put them apprentice at fourteen, and give 40*s.* apprentice fee with each. It is so useful a charity that I have frequently wished to see as many charity schools as we have churches in the town, which are four, and I yet hope the good providence of God may bring it to pass in the next generation."* Bryan Blundell died in 1756, with that wish unfulfilled. Liverpool still has only one Blue-Coat School; but that has grown immensely since the death of its founder, and the Blundells have continued to be champions of good works to this day.

Yet more conspicuous in the history of Liverpool, during the eighteenth century, is the name of Foster Cunliffe, 'a merchant,'—according to his panegyrist—'whose honesty, diligence, and knowledge in mercantile affairs procured wealth and credit to himself and his country; a magistrate who administered justice with discernment, candour, and impartiality; a Christian, devout and exemplary in the exercise of every private duty; a friend to merit; a patron to distress; an enemy only to vice and sloth.'† He was descended from an ancient Lancashire family which had lands granted to it at Billington, near Whalley, somewhere before the close of the thirteenth century, and which for a long time was famous both in commercial and in political history. In

* The foregoing sketch of Bryan Blundell's life is taken almost entirely from a brief memoir of his own, printed in the *Account of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Trimmer* (London, 1810), vol. ii., pp. 317–321.

† From the inscription under his handsome monument in Saint Peter's Church, Liverpool.

the year 1282 we find an Adam Cunliffe named as one of the twelve principal persons in Manchester; and four hundred years later Nicholas and Robert Cunliffe were members of Parliament for Lancashire and leaders of the Royalist cause in Lancashire. Nicholas's grandson was Ellis Cunliffe, a notable Cambridge divine who settled in the north, and became the father of Foster Cunliffe, the next great merchant patriot of Liverpool after Sir Thomas Johnson.*

He was born in 1685. He was chosen Mayor of Liverpool in 1716, in 1729, and again in 1735. In the latter year he was prevented from entering Parliament owing to his inability to show the prescribed qualification, just as Johnson had been unseated thirteen years before; but for a time long before and long after that date he was the leading man in Liverpool affairs. Political opponents regarded him as a tyrannical ruler of both the corporation and the town during a third of a century; those of his own party honoured him as an exemplary promoter of their cause. At any rate he was a great promoter of Liverpool commerce. When he began work as a merchant, the traffic of Liverpool was chiefly with Ireland and the English coast towns, while the Virginian tobacco trade was just rising into importance. At the time of his death, in 1758, that trade, although still vigorous, had become insignificant in comparison with the newer African trade.

In 1709 this African trade employed one ship of 30 tons. In 1760 it gave occupation to seventy-four vessels, with an aggregate burthen of 8,178 tons, and enriched upwards of a hundred merchants, nearly half as many as were to be found in London and Bristol put together, those being the only two other towns concerned in this branch of commerce.† 'The principal exports of Liverpool,' said Samuel Derrick, who visited the town in the latter year, 'are all kinds of woollen and worsted goods, with other manufactures of

* Wotton, *Baronetage of England* (London, 1771), vol. iii., pp. 152–155.

† Brooke, *Liverpool as it was during the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century* (Liverpool, 1853), p. 234; Williamson's *Liverpool Memorandum Book* (Liverpool, 1753).

Manchester and Sheffield, and Birmingham wares, &c. These they barter on the coast of Guinea for slaves, gold dust, and elephants' teeth. The slaves they dispose of at Jamaica, Barbadoes, and the other West Indian islands, for rum and sugar, for which they are sure of a quick sale at home.'*

The slave-trade was certainly not a very commendable branch of commerce, but it was the great source of Liverpool prosperity during the eighteenth century, and, till near its close, was followed with a clear conscience by men of exemplary honesty and known Christian worth. In 1753 Foster Cunliffe and the two sons then in partnership with him, Ellis and Robert, had four slave-ships fitted to hold 1,120 slaves in all. These made two or three voyages in the year, between Guinea and the West Indies and North America, and brought the Cunliffes profit enough to stock a dozen vessels with rum, sugar, and other articles for sale in England. Five of these twelve vessels traded with Antigua, four with Maryland, two with Montserrat, and one with Jamaica.†

A hundred other merchants were in 1753 engaged in the African and West Indian trade, the total number of ships possessed by them in all its branches being one hundred and ninety-four, while only eight-and-twenty were sent to the European ports, and twenty-five to Ireland, Bristol, Glasgow, and other British haunts of commerce, besides eighty small sloops reserved for local trade in salt, coal, and other home commodities.‡ For the next half-century the business of Liverpool progressed in about the same proportion. In 1799, the busiest year of all, the slave-trade was nearly six times as great as in 1751. In the ten years between 1795 and 1804 the Liverpool merchants shipped 323,770 slaves from Africa to America and the West Indies, the London share in the traffic including only 46,405 slaves, and the Bristol people being responsible for the shipment of 10,718.§ It

* Baines, *History of Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1852), p. 427.
† Williamson's *Liverpool Memorandum Book.*
‡ *Ibid.*
§ Brooke, p. 234.

was well for the honour of England that the trade was put a stop to in 1807.

That was not, however, till it had done its share in making Liverpool, after London, the largest and richest port in the United Kingdom. Its annual shipping, during the seven years ending 1716, averaged 18,371 tons, being one twenty-fourth that of all England. During the seven years ending with 1792, the yearly average was 260,380 tons, more than a sixth of that of the whole kingdom. That is, while the nation at large had in the interval increased its shipping about three times, the maritime trade of Liverpool had grown considerably more than twelve times as great.* The chief causes of this wonderful development were the African slave-trade and the West Indian and Virginian trade—for the first half of the period chiefly in tobacco, for the second half chiefly in sugar, rum, coffee and cotton.† There were also five other distinct branches of foreign commerce. Merchants sent their ships to British North America for timber and to Greenland for fish, while with the western countries of Europe, with the Mediterranean States, and with the ports

* Baines, p. 491. These were the stages of its growth, in septennial averages;—

Years.	Tons.	Years.	Tons.
1716	18,371	1758	44,168
1723	18,607	1765	62,390
1730	18,564	1772	84,792
1737	19,921	1779	79,470
1744	22,404	1786	151,347
1751	32,702	1792	260,382

† This table shows the state of the West Indian trade in 1787;—

	Outwards.		Inwards.	
	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.
London	218	61,695	252	70,418
Liverpool	87	17,463	143	27,578
Bristol	73	16,913	71	16,209
Lancaster	37	5,665	33	4,043
All other ports	86	7,216	107	1,952
Totals	451	108,952	606	120,200

Brooke, p. 233.

of the Baltic, they effected an interchange of miscellaneous English and Continental products. Considerable, also, were the trades with Ireland and the various ports of England and Scotland. 'The inhabitants are universal merchants,' it was said in 1753, 'and trade to all parts except Turkey and the East Indies. Liverpool shares the trade of Ireland and Wales with Bristol, and engrosses most of the trade with Scotland.'* Before long, Glasgow made the Clyde accessible to large vessels of its own, and so ceased to use Liverpool ships and warehouses for its traffic with distant countries. But soon also, Liverpool and Glasgow combined to procure the opening of trade with Turkey and the East, and in that way obtained for themselves and the other ports of Great Britain a large accession of wealth.

Throughout the eighteenth century Liverpool was the most exclusively commercial town in the kingdom. London, and, during the first half of the period, Bristol, Norwich and other places, had larger shares in trade, but none of them were so entirely devoted to commerce as Liverpool. It was pre-eminently a haunt of merchants, and most of them self-made men, or men whose fathers had risen from the crowd by their own exertions. Very characteristic is Samuel Derrick's report of them, made in 1760. 'Though few of the merchants have more education than befits a counting-house,' he said, 'they are genteel in their address. They are hospitable and very friendly to strangers, even those of whom they have the least knowledge. Their tables are plenteously furnished, and their viands well served up. Their rum is excellent, and they consume large quantities of it in punch.'† But something better might have been said about the Liverpool merchants than that they ate good dinners and drank plenty of punch. In advancing their own fortunes, they aided the general progress of the country to a wonderful extent, and, while enriching themselves, made of Liverpool a great and thriving city. Thomas Johnson and the Norrises, Foster

* Williamson's *Liverpool Memorandum Book.* † Baines, p. 427.

Cunliffe, and Bryan Blundell had many notable successors, good friends to Liverpool and its trade, as famous for their philanthropy as for their commercial wisdom.

There was among them, however, no single master-mind. No one merchant stands out as the leader of the rest. The course of prosperity was already marked out, and there were hundreds vieing with one another for supremacy; the leaders in the race led rather from the advantageous circumstances in which they were placed than from any marked originality or superior intelligence in themselves.

So it was with Arthur and Benjamin Heywood. They were descended from an old John Heywood who owned Heywood Mill, at Waterside, near Bolton, in the time of Edward the Sixth. His great-grandsons were the Reverend Oliver Heywood, of Halifax, and the Reverend Nathaniel Heywood, Vicar of Ormskirk, both of them ejected on account of their non-conformity in 1662; and Nathaniel was father of another Nathaniel Heywood, who lived quietly at Ormskirk, and a Richard Heywood, who resided sometimes at Liverpool, sometimes at Drogheda, making some money by carrying on a trade between the two places. Richard Heywood had no children, and in 1699 he requested that his nephew Benjamin might be carefully educated and sent to him at Drogheda. This was done shortly before the old merchant's death, and Benjamin Heywood succeeded to a thriving business in Drogheda. He was admitted to the guild of that town in 1707, when he was about twenty years old; soon afterwards, he married Anne Graham, then fifteen years of age, daughter of General Arthur Graham, of Armagh, and niece, apparently, of John Graham, mayor of Drogheda. The Grahams were an old and wealthy family, great landholders and fortunate traders;* and Benjamin Heywood's connection with them was of great advantage to his business. He died in 1725, only about eight-and-thirty years of age;

* Their history has been told by Sir BERNARD BURKE, *Vicissitudes of Families*, Series iii.

but leaving a large fortune to his widow and nine children. The widow, reported to be as handsome as she was good, lived till 1747, steadily refusing all offers of marriage, and devoting herself to the education of her children, and the administration, on their behalf, of the property committed to her trust. She found good husbands for her daughters, and saw her sons on the high road to prosperity of their own procurement.*

Of these sons Arthur and Benjamin were the most famous. Arthur was born in 1715; Benjamin in or near the year 1722. Arthur was sent to Liverpool in 1731, there to serve his five years' apprenticeship under John Hardman, of Allerton, then, and for four-and-twenty years to come, one of the greatest merchants in Liverpool, also one of its representatives in Parliament for some time before his death in 1755. Benjamin does not seem to have proceeded to Liverpool till 1741. On the 15th of August in that year he was bound apprentice to James Crosby, another merchant of the town, his brother Arthur being his surety. Among the conditions of the apprentice oath it was stipulated that if he 'committed matrimony,' the bonus paid should be forfeited, and the apprenticeship at an end.

Benjamin Heywood did not commit matrimony till five years after the term of this prohibition; but in another way he was sorely tempted to forego his chances of success as a merchant. In 1745 all Liverpool was in a turmoil of patriotism. The first intimation of the Pretender's having landed in the Highlands was conveyed to the Government through Owen Pritchard, the Mayor of Liverpool, who heard the news from the captain of a vessel, returning from the Baltic, which had put in at Skye. Immediately great preparations for defence were made by the people of the

* *Whole Works of the Reverend Oliver Heywood* (Idle, 1827), vol. i., pp. 505–514. For much that is in the foregoing paragraph, as well as for most of what follows concerning the Heywoods, I am indebted to Mr. Thomas Heywood, F.S.A., who has kindly placed at my disposal a series of notes from documents in the possession of the family.

town. The Corporation granted 1,000*l.*—subsequently increased to 6,000*l.*—to raise a regiment of volunteers, afterwards famous as the Liverpool Blues. Therein Arthur Heywood was at once appointed a captain; and his brother Benjamin, commissioned as a lieutenant on the 4th of October, was raised to a captaincy on the 12th of November. The young men, or their friends, had also interest enough to secure the command of the regiment for their uncle, Colonel Graham, who afterwards obtained a colonelcy, and eventually became Brigadier-General in the regular army, taking most of the Liverpool Blues as recruits to his regiment.

The Pretender entered England on the 8th of November, 1745. He summoned Carlisle on the 10th of the month, and on the 15th obtained possession of it. On that day the Liverpool Blues marched out to Prescot, and on the 16th they proceeded to Warrington, "where," said Benjamin Heywood, who kept a diary of his movements in soldierly style, "we lay till the 20th." They were in Warrington again on the 22nd, orders being sent to them from London that they were to defend the pass of the Mersey, and prevent a junction with the rebels in Wales. On the 25th, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, they began to pull down Warrington Bridge, and did their work so promptly that it was entirely demolished by 4 o'clock. For this the Blues were subsequently sued by the Warrington corporation; but the action was stayed by order of the Government. They also captured a reconnoitring party of rebels in Warrington; but that was the nearest approach to fighting that was made in that quarter, the Pretender being deterred from attacking Liverpool or venturing into Wales, it was said, by the formidable appearance of the Blues. The amateur regiment was afterwards left in garrison at Carlisle while the Duke of Cumberland fought the battle of Culloden. After that there was no further need for the volunteer corps, and it was broken up, many of its members returning to their shops or counting-houses in Liverpool,

many others going to take employment in the regular army. Benjamin Heywood was so pleased with his little play at soldiering that it needed all the arguments of his brother and friends to prevent his making it the business of his life.

It is likely, however, that his military ardour soon died out. On the 17th of October, 1746, two months after the termination of his apprenticeship, he took the burgess oath, as a preliminary to going into partnership with his elder brother. Arthur Heywood became a burgess ten years before that, and was an independent merchant for the greater part of the time. In 1739 he married Elizabeth, daughter of Samuel Ogden, of Mossley Hill, a Liverpool merchant, and through her acquired a share of the large fortune left by her grandfather, John Pemberton.* This first wife bore him only one daughter, and died on the 8th of February, 1748. On the 26th of April, 1750, he married her cousin Hannah, a daughter of Richard Milnes, of Wakefield, by another of Pemberton's daughters. In 1751, Benjamin Heywood also married, choosing for a wife one of his brother's sisters-in-law, Phœbe Ogden. Both of Arthur Heywood's wives, and Benjamin's wife as well, were thus grand-daughters, and joint heiresses of old John Pemberton. The triple connection must have added largely to the wealth that they received through their mother, and have enabled them, while yet young men, to take rank with the oldest and richest of the Liverpool merchants.

Among these the most notable of all was Foster Cunliffe, sixty-one years old in 1746. A great trade was carried on

* John Pemberton, born on the 29th of June, 1666, and a burgess of Chester, gained much wealth by trading in Liverpool. He died on the 1st of April, 1743. He left three daughters. The eldest never married. The second, Penelope, married Samuel Ogden, and thus became mother-in-law of both Arthur and Benjamin Heywood, and great-grandmother of the Sir Benjamin Heywood, who died in 1865. The third, Bridget, married Richard Milnes, of Wakefield; thus becoming, in her turn, the mother-in-law of Arthur Heywood, and through him the great-grandmother of Mr. John Pemberton Heywood, now the head of the house in Liverpool. Yet more notable is another of her great-grandsons, the present Lord Houghton, son of Robert Pemberton Milnes, of Wakefield.

by him, his sons, Ellis and Robert, being partners with him, in African slaves and West Indian produce. Next in rank, and of about the same age, was Bryan Blundell, the philanthropic founder of the Blue Coat School, who found in his philanthropy no argument against joining in the slave-trade. Robert Cunliffe carried on the business after his father's death and his brother's retirement, and later generations of Blundells have held their place among the merchants of Liverpool to this day. Another famous Liverpool house began about the same time as the Heywood's, and prospered by the same means. Old John Earle kept an ironmonger's shop in Castle Street during the first half of the eighteenth century, and, like other leading shopkeepers, joined now and then in the ventures to foreign lands. Thereby, and by his regular business, he throve so well that he left money enough to enable his eldest son John to live without working, and to establish his three other sons as wealthy merchants. These three were Ralph—who in 1788, two years before his death, changed his name to Willis, in order that he might take possession of some landed property that had been bequeathed to him—Thomas, and William who died in 1788, at the age of sixty-seven.*

Both the Earles and the Heywoods were owners of African slavers, and of other ships going to the West Indies for sugar, rum, and coffee. They were also associated in nearly all the principal movements of their times, whether commercial or social. Ralph Earle contributed 2*l.* 2*s.* to the Liverpool Infirmary that, in 1748, was set up on the ground now covered by Saint George's Hall. Arthur and Benjamin Heywood gave 5*l.* 5*s.* a piece, while Bryan Blundell subscribed 42*l.*, and Ellis and Robert Cunliffe 15*l.* 15*s.* each. Foster Cunliffe was treasurer of the fund, and a large subscriber to it.† Another and more important building, in which all these merchants were concerned, was

* *History of Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1797), p. 127; Burke, *Dictionary of the Landed Gentry.*

† Baines, *History of Liverpool*, pp. 412–414.

'the New Exchange, 'which for its size,' it was said at the 'time, 'is not to be paralleled in Europe. It was begun in 1749, and finished in 1754.*

In the setting up of another sort of Exchange the Heywoods also took part. This was the Warrington Academy, founded in 1757. The Unitarians, leaders of scientific and philosophical thought in those days, had long felt the need of some central meeting-place, which should also serve as a place of education for young men preparing for the ministry. After some deliberation, Warrington, the mid-way town between Liverpool and Manchester, and on the high road to both the south and the north, was fixed upon, and there the Academy was organized, Arthur and Benjamin Heywood, Thomas Bentley, Thomas Wharton, and some others being trustees on behalf of the Liverpool Unitarians. Dr. Taylor of Norwich, Dr. Aikin of Kibworth, and Mr. Holt of Kirkdale were the first tutors, Taylor being soon replaced by Priestley; and the Academy became, for many years, a centre of enlightened thought and zealous action in furtherance of sound views in politics and science, literature, and philosophy.†

The Thomas Bentley, who took an influential part in this business, was younger than the Heywoods, and of much less note as a Liverpool merchant; a man, however, who did quite as much in aid of the general progress of English commerce. He was born at Scrapton, in Derbyshire, on the first day of 1730. In 1745 he was clerk in a wholesale draper's shop in Manchester. Thence he went abroad for a few years, and shortly before 1757 he was established in King Street, Liverpool, as a dealer in Manchester goods, having a

* Troughton, *History of Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1810), pp. 285-290; Brooke, pp. 71-74, 119, 195. The New Exchange was destroyed by fire in 1795, to be re-built and opened in 1797. Soon after that it became the Town Hall, part of it having previously been used for municipal purposes, and a newer Exchange, larger, and in every way more convenient than the other building, was completed in 1808.

† *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. xi. (1859), pp. 1-30, an interesting paper by Mr. H. A. Bright.

private house in Paradise Street.* His association with the Warrington Academy brought him into intimate friendship with Priestley. "The tutors," said Priestley, "having sufficient society amongst themselves, we had not much acquaintance out of the Academy. Sometimes, however, I made an excursion to the towns in the neighbourhood. At Liverpool I was always received by Mr. Bentley, a man of excellent taste, improved understanding, and good disposition."†

The taste, understanding, and disposition were at once apparent to Josiah Wedgwood when, while on a visit to Liverpool, he was introduced to Bentley in 1762. The two soon found strong bonds of friendship in their common desire to benefit mankind. "I most sincerely congratulate you," wrote the potter to the merchant in June, 1763, referring to the opening of the Octagon Chapel in Liverpool, to which the Heywoods were subscribers; "and sympathize with you in the exalted pleasure you must feel in thus leading the way to a reformation so long talked of and so much wanted in our church militant here below. I long to join with you, but am, alas, tied down to this rugged pot-making spot of earth, and cannot leave it at present without suffering for it." ‡ The

* Boardman, *Benleyana* (Liverpool, 1851), pp. 7, 8, 13.

† Miss Meteyard, *Life of Josiah Wedgwood* (London, 1865–6), vol. i. pp. 303–308.

‡ Meteyard, vol. i., p. 317. The Octagon Chapel, and Bentley's share in it, should not be forgotten by students of religious progress in England. It was designed for the use of Christians whose Christianity was wide enough to include all who sought to shape their lives in accordance with the spirit that shone through the life of Christ, without regard to creeds and doctrines, or any sort of Pharisaism and Sadduceeism. The project failed. Octagon Chapel was sold to the Corporation, and converted, in 1792, into Saint Catharine's Church, finally to be pulled down and replaced by the Fire Police Station. In 1776, Bentley, then living in London, published, in conjunction with a Mr. Williams, a Unitarian minister, *A Liturgy on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality.* "Of all the projects that have ever been formed," said Bentley, in the Preface thereto, "there is not one so absurd, and that hath so much mischief and wickedness to answer for, as that of bringing mankind to an uniformity of opinion by the influence of penal laws. A genuine history of the effects of this design would con-

'rugged pot-making spot of earth,' at Burslem, was becoming the nucleus of one of the most wonderful developments of

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tain the greatest part of the calamities that have afflicted the world, and rendered it a scene of discord and wretchedness.

"Public worship, as a recital of sublime and important trusts, is reasonable in itself, useful in its effects, and delightful in the exercise. We are so formed, that every pleasure is multiplied on us by society. To see numbers of our fellow-creatures, equally sincere with ourselves, in acknowledging those truths which make us all happy, must afford as high a pleasure as we are capable of.

"It cannot be enjoyed, however, in this country by any man who has the misfortune to disapprove of the Book of Common Prayer, and the method of worship among the Dissenters. These may have this misfortune, without deserving blame. It is the duty of all men to act on the principles they possess. We apprehend, therefore, that in providing for our religious improvement, on those principles we believe to be true—while we offer no man an injury, aim at no man's interest, and profess the warmest attachment to the constitution and laws of our country—we do no more than we are allowed to do, by the principles of nature and religion, the best laws of civic society, and that prevailing temper and disposition of men in England, which may be called the spirit of the times and the ruling law of the land. It is with pleasure we have observed that many degrees of improvement have taken place in various parts of Europe; and that the minds of wise and good men are well employed in removing the errors of dark ages, and in suiting forms of worship to the present state of knowledge. To all such we wish success; and to all mankind the perfect enjoyment of their inestimable liberties. Let every man worship God according to the dictation of his conscience; let religion be as free as philosophy, and truth will surely prevail. But as we apprehend the chief defect of all forms of devotion proceeds from an idea in those who composed them, of the necessity of a certain uniformity of opinion in speculative and doubtful doctrines, we wish to try the effect of a form of social worship, composed on the most enlarged and general principles; in which all men may join who acknowledge the existence of a supreme intelligence, and the universal obligations of morality. We can see no reason why our public forms of devotion should be contrived to divide men into parties, while we enjoy the most valuable blessings in common, and all acknowledge the most important truths. Are we not all the children of one benevolent parent? Do not Jews and Gentiles, Christians and Mahometans, own his power, his wisdom, and his goodness? Do not all men acknowledge the eternal obligations of piety and virtue? And doth not the harmony of the world, and the happiness of society, depend chiefly upon these great principles? Why, then, should any be excluded the pleasure and advantage of social worship, who acknowledge them? If all good men of all religions would sometimes unite in adoring Almighty God, and acknowledging those great truths which they all hold to be the most important, it might be hoped that

manufacturing energy in modern England; in which soon Bentley was to be a sharer. Long before the firm of Wedgwood and Bentley was established, however, the Liverpool merchant found half his business in exporting the manufactures of the Burslem potter. "The bulk of our particular manufactures," wrote Wedgwood in 1765, "are exported to foreign markets, for our home consumption is very slight in comparison to what is sent abroad, and the principal of these markets are the Continent and islands of North America. To the Continent we send an amazing quantity of white stoneware, and some of the finer kinds; but for the islands, we cannot make anything too costly."* In conducting this traffic Thomas Bentley, as senior partner in the house of Bentley and Boardman, was the principal agent, until he left Liverpool to enter into yet closer relations with Wedgwood; and even then he continued to share in it by connection with his partner.

While in Liverpool, Bentley was associated in every movement helpful to the social and commercial well-being of the town. He was almost the principal founder, in 1757, of the Liverpool Library, which, after a century of progress, received a splendid house in the building set up through the munificence of Sir William Brown.† In that good work the Heywoods joined with him. In another, Bentley was opposed both to them and to all the other great merchants of the town. He was the first assailant of the slave-trade, taking

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those comprehensive principles would have a stronger tendency to harmonize and unite than doubtful and less important opinions have hitherto had to divide them. It is for the use of those who entertain such generous sentiments as these that the following liturgy has been composed, the principal object of which is to promote universal piety and benevolence. And it is under the protection of a good Providence, and the humanity of an enlightened age, that we mean to worship God according to the best dictates of our hearts; without presuming to prescribe to others, or to insult any who, in like manner with us, assert their own most sacred rights, in the spirit of charity and peace."—BOARDMAN, pp. 22, 23.

* METEYARD, vol. i., p. 367.

† BOARDMAN, *Bentleyana* (Liverpool, 1851), p. 9.

every opportunity, in spite of ridicule and reprobation, of denouncing it as unchristian and inhuman, and at the same time doing his utmost to induce the African merchants to turn their attention to trade in ivory, palm-oil, woods, and other more legitimate produce of the Guinea coast.* His arguments apparently had no effect, but they led the way to the later and successful efforts of Roscoe, Rathbone, and other philanthropists of a later generation.

Of Brindley's scheme for constructing the Grand Trunk Canal Bentley was, in common with Wedgwood, a zealous advocate from first to last. He wrote a pamphlet and numerous newspaper articles about it, procured for it, after some trouble, the support of the Liverpool corporation, and went to London to give evidence in its favour.† In other public business he took influential part. Only a few days after the passing of the Trent and Mersey Navigation Bill, which sanctioned Brindley's canal, he was in London, as agent of the corporation on business connected with the Bankrupt Act. "I am a little sorry," wrote Wedgwood to him on the 26th of May, 1766, "for your being obliged to take the field again before the scars of the last campaign are closed up. But take courage, my friend. Fatigues and hardships are very necessary in forming great characters; and you will, by these frequent attendings in Parliament, be the better prepared for filling a seat in that august assembly yourself, when the time comes, and who knows how near that may be? But let this happen when it will, I perceive very plainly, by the good sense your corporation hath now shown, that, when anything of moment to the port of Liverpool is to be transacted in Parliament, you must be their agent with the senate."‡

* Boardman, *Bentleyana* (Liverpool, 1851), p. 10.

† The history of the canal is fully given in Mr. Smiles's *Lives of the Engineers*, vol. i., pp. 334–448; and everything known of Bentley's and Wedgwood's share in it is detailed by Miss Meteyard, vol. i., pp. 339–438.

‡ Meteyard, vol. i., pp. 469, 470.

That, however, was not for long. Before his acquaintance with Bentley, Wedgwood had fairly entered on the wonderful business that was to turn earthenware manufacture into an art, and to make the Staffordshire Potteries a famous source of wealth. Every later year saw rapid progress, both in Wedgwood's artistic designs and in the extent of his business. In 1766 he bought a new plot of land near to Burslem, and thither Bentley went to aid him in planning the new works to be constructed upon it.* Before the year was out he found Bentley's advice so necessary to him that he offered him a partnership in the business, just then being remodelled. Bentley's letter, detailing the grounds on which he hesitated about accepting the offer, is lost; but Wedgwood's reply is extant and very helpful to an understanding of both men's characters. "I have read your letter many times over," he said, "and find several of the objections to our nearer approach may be surmounted. The first is 'your total ignorance of the business.' That I deny: you have taste, the best foundation for our intended concern, and which must be our Primum Mobile; for without that all will stand still, or better it did so; and, for the rest, it will soon be learned by so apt a scholar. The very air of this country will soon inspire you with the more mechanical part of our trade. The difficulty of leaving your business in Liverpool, which seemeth now to be altering for the better, I cannot so easily obviate; I have, it's true, a great opinion of the design answering our most sanguine expectations with respect to profit; but if you should suffer as much by having your attention taken off your mercantile concerns, *you* would be a loser on the whole, though *I* should not, and to what degree that loss might be extended I can have no idea, nor you any certainty, unless we could divine in what proportion your absence would affect the success or prevent the increase of your commerce. The money objection is obviated to my hand, and, I doubt not, in

* Meteyard, vol. i., p. 461.

a way that will be agreeable to us both" — that is, by Wedgwood's declaration that he would be glad enough to have Bentley for a partner without his investing any money in the concern. "But the leaving your friends, and giving up a thousand agreeable connections and pleasures at Liverpool, for which you can have no compensation in kind—this staggers my hopes more than everything else put together. Can you part from your Octagon and enlightened Octagonian brethren, to join the diminutive and weak society of a country chapel? Can you give up the rational and elevated enjoyment of your Philosophical Club for the puerile téte-â-téte of a country fireside? And—to conclude all under this head in one question—can you exchange the frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with your learned and ingenious friends, which your present situation affords you, besides ten thousand other elegancies and enjoyments of a town life, to employ yourself amongst mechanics, dirt, and smoke? If this prospect does not fright you, I have some hopes; and if you think you could really fall in love with and make a mistress of this new business, as I have done, I should have little or no doubt of our success, for if we consider the great variety of colours in our raw materials, the infinite ductility of clay, and that we have universal beauty to copy after, we have certainly the fairest prospect of enlarging this branch of manufacture to our wishes; and, as genius will not be wanting, I am firmly persuaded that our profits will be in proportion to our application, and I am as confident that it would be, beyond comparison, more congenial and delightful to every particle of matter, sense, and spirit in your composition, to be the creator, as it were, of beauty, rather than merely the vehicle or medium to convey it from one hand to another, if other circumstances can be but rendered tolerable." *

Bentley yielded to these arguments, and, after some delay necessary to the construction of works, at that time unrivalled in extent and mechanical appliances, the firm of Wedgwood

* Meteyard, vol. i., pp. 483–485.

and Bentley was established, and Etruria was opened. On the 13th of June, 1769, Wedgwood moulded the first lump of clay, and Bentley for the first time turned the potter's wheel, at an establishment more memorable than any other for its influence both on English art and on English commerce.*

"I am always so much better satisfied in my own mind and pleased with everything about me after spending a few days with you," said Wedgwood, in one of his letters to Bentley, "that I long more and more for the time of your settlement at Etruria, when I may feast every day upon what I am now permitted to taste of only two or three times a year, or so."† Bentley's residence in Staffordshire, however, was very brief. Hardly had he left Liverpool, before it was found desirable that he should take up his residence in London, there to superintend the mercantile part of the business, besides having oversight of the branch works, which, in 1770, were set up at Chelsea, and doing all he could in private ways, both to forward the sale of the new manufactures and to obtain suitable designs for adoption in them. Henceforward, for the next ten years, we find him living first in Greek Street, Soho, and afterwards at Turnham Green, and taking prominent position in London society, negotiating with artists like Flaxman, and borrowing works of art from all who owned them. Sir William Hamilton lent him the treasures lately brought from Herculaneum; others supplied him with Oriental products. Often he was sent for by George the Third and Queen Charlotte, to tell them of the progress of the works at Etruria, and to receive their orders for the newest and choicest manufactures. In all sorts of ways he gave valuable aid to the enterprise originated by Josiah Wedgwood, bringing thereto less in-

* Jewitt, *Wedgwood; being a life of Josiah Wedgwood, with Notices of his Works, Memoirs of the Wedgwoods and other Families, and a History of the Early Potteries of Staffordshire* (London, 1865), pp. 201-5.

† Meteyard, vol. i., p. 492.

lentive genius and less marvellous energy than were shown by Wedgwood, but surpassing his partner in refinement and grace.*

It seems to have been in a great measure at Bentley's suggestion that Wedgwood, after long battling with the inferior workmen, who sought to enrich themselves by stealing his secrets and copying his inventions, resolved, as he said, "to cast all dread of rivalship behind his back,

* Boardman, pp. 11, 12. To his partner in the Liverpool business, he thus wrote from London on the 4th of November, 1769:—"We are every day finding out some ingenious man, or curious piece of workmanship; all which we endeavour to make subservient to the improvement of our taste, or the perfection of our manufacture. I have not time to name the things that we have seen; but one great curiosity I cannot omit, with which we have been highly entertained: I mean a Chinese portrait-modeller, lately arrived from Canton—one of those artists who make the Mandarin figures that are brought to England. He intends to stay here some years, is in the Chinese dress, makes portraits (small busts in clay), which he colours, and produces very striking likenesses with great expedition. I have paid him three visits, and had a good deal of conversation with him, for he speaks some English, and is a good-natured, sensible man; very mild in his temper, and gentle in his motions. His dresses are chiefly of satin. I have seen him in crimson and in black. The India figures upon the fans are very just resemblances of the originals. His complexion is very swarth, but the eyelashes almost always in motion. His arms are very slender, like those of a delicate woman, and his fingers very long—all his limbs extremely supple; his hair is cut off before, and he has a long plaited tail hanging down to the bottom of his back. He has been with the King and Queen, who were much pleased with him, and he is to take the portraits of the royal infantry. I have not time to be more particular now; but he is far the greatest curiosity I have seen. He has ten guineas apiece for his portraits, which are very small." On the 15th of December, 1770, he wrote to the same friend: "Last Monday Mr. Wedgwood and I had the honour of a long audience of their majesties at the Queen's palace, to present some *bas-reliefs* her Majesty had ordered, and to show some new improvements, with which they were well pleased. They expressed, in the most obliging and condescending manner, their attention to our manufacture, and entered very freely into conversation on the further improvement of it, and on many other subjects. The King is well acquainted with business, and with the characters of the principal manufacturers, merchants, and artists; and seems to have the success of all our manufactures much at heart, and to understand the importance of them. The Queen has more sensibility, true politeness, engaging affability, and sweetness of temper, than any great lad I ever had the honour of speaking to."—Boardman, pp. 15, 17.

treat it as a base and vanquished enemy, and not bestow another serious thought upon it."* "So far from being afraid of other people getting our patterns," wrote Wedgwood to his friend in September, 1769, "we should glory in it, throw out all the hints we can, and, if possible, have all the artists in Europe working after our models. This would be noble, and would suit both our dispositions and sentiments much better than all the narrow mercenary selfish trammels. How do you feel yourself, my friend? Have you forgot how our hearts burned within us, when we conversed upon this subject on our way from Liverpool to Prescot? We were then persuaded that this open generous plan would not only be most congenial to our hearts and best feelings, but, in all probability, might best answer our wishes in pecuniary advantages; and, for the time, I well remember we agreed to pursue it. Do you think when our principles were known, the nobility would not still more make it a point to patronize and encourage men who acted upon such different principles to the rest of mankind,—the trading and mercantile part of them at least? When they are witness to our bestowing so much pains and expense in the improvement of a capital manufacture, nay, in creating a new one, and that not for our particular emolument only, but that we generously lay our works open to be imitated by other artists and manufacturers for the good of the community at large, this would surely procure us the good-will of our best customers. With respect to myself, there is nothing relating to business I so much wish for as being released from these degrading slavish chains, these mean selfish fears of other people copying my works. Dare you step forth, my dear friend and associate, and share the risk and honour of acting on these enlarged principles?"† Bentley declared himself quite willing, as he had always been, to enter on this bold and generous course; and the result was, great improvement in the fortunes of the house of Wedgwood and Bentley.

* Meteyard, vol. ii., pp. 216. † *Ibid.*, pp. 214, 215.

Thomas Bentley did not live, however, to see the fulness of its triumph. In 1754, he had married Hannah Oates, of Sheffield, who died very soon after, and in 1772 Mary Stamford, of Derby, became his wife. But neither bore him any children, and he died himself, at his house in Turnham Green on the 26th of November, 1780, only fifty years of age. "Blessed with an elevated and comprehensive understanding," it was said on his monument in Chiswick Church, "informed in variety of science, he possessed a warm and brilliant imagination, a pure and elegant taste. His extensive abilities, guided by the most expansive philanthrophy, were employed in forming and executing plans for the public good: he thought with the freedom of a philosopher: he acted with the integrity of a virtuous citizen."*

In the meanwhile the earthenware trade with America, which Bentley had partly begun as Wedgwood's agent, continued to be carried on in Liverpool. The town also, during the latter half of the seventeenth century, contained some establishments of its own for the manufacture of blue and white earthenware. It was yet more famous for its watches, 'which are not to be excelled in Europe,' it was said in 1753. 'All the different branches are manufactured in and about the town, to supply the London and foreign markets.'†

But Liverpool was then, as now, much more notable as a resort of merchants than of manufacturers. Great impetus came to their trade through the trading difficulties of the towns more open to attack during the war with France that attended the early years of George the Second's reign. 'The harbour being situated so near the mouth of the North Channel,' said the same old chronicler of 1753, "between Ireland and Scotland,—a passage very little known to or frequented by the enemy—afforded many conveniences to

* Boardman, pp. 12, 13.

† Williamson's *Liverpool Memorandum Book.* Minute and interesting histories of the Liverpool pottery works and watch manufactures are in the *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Historical Society.*

the merchants here, untasted by those of other ports, which invited many strangers from different parts to begin trade and settle here, finding it so advantageous a mart.' * The disadvantages of war were, however, felt even by Liverpool in 1756, when fresh fighting began. A French privateer entered the Channel, and, in 1758, Liverpool was blockaded for seven weeks. On the 13th of February, 1759, forty-five Liverpool merchants requested Williamson, who had started his *Liverpool Advertiser* three years before, to discontinue the list of ships going in and out of the port which he had been in the habit of publishing, as 'they had too much reason to apprehend that that conduct had been of very bad consequence this war.' Among the merchants who signed the document were Robert Cunliffe, Ralph and William Earle, and Arthur and Benjamin Heywood.†

In spite of war and other hindrances, however, Liverpool commerce made steady and rapid progress. The Old Dock which had been initiated by Sir Thomas Johnson and others in 1700, having proved insufficient to the growing wants of the town, the Salthouse Dock, begun in 1734, was opened in 1753, and in 1761 an Act was obtained for building George's Dock. It was begun in 1767, and completed in 1771. In 1784, authority was obtained for building two other docks, King's and Queen's. The former was opened in 1788, the latter in 1796. In 1764, Liverpool had seventy-four vessels engaged in the African trade, a hundred and forty-one in the American and the West Indian; the total of ships cleared inwards during the year from all ports being seven hundred and sixty-six, while the outward clearances amounted to eight hundred and thirty-two. The trade of Bristol in the same year was represented by three hundred and thirty-two in-coming, and three hundred and forty-two out-going, vessels. In 1784 the entire custom-house duties of Liverpool were 648,684*l.*; those of Bristol only 334,909*l.*, little more than half as much. This stupendous growth of trade, led of course to rapid increase of population, and extension of the

* Williamson's *Liverpool Memorandum Book.* † Baines, p. 425.

limits of the town. In 1730, the inhabitants of Liverpool numbered 12,074, and they lived in 2,430 houses. In 1760 the population had increased to 25,787, the houses to 5,156. In 1770, the numbers were respectively, 35,600, and 6,800; in 1790, they were 55,732, and 8,865; and in 1801, they were 77,708, and 11,784. In seventy years Liverpool was increased six-fold; in the ensuing sixty years it was increased nearly six times again.* 'This quondam village,' said Erskine, on a famous Liverpool trial in 1791, 'which is now fit to be a proud capital for any empire in the world, has started up like an enchanted palace even in the memory of living men. I had before often been at the principal sea-ports in this island, and believing that, having seen Bristol and those other towns that deservedly pass as great ones, I had seen everything in this great nation of navigators on which a subject should pride himself, I own I was astonished and astounded when, after passing a distant ferry and ascending a hill, I was told by my guide, "All you see spread out beneath you, that immense plain, which stands like another Venice upon the waters, which is intersected by those numerous docks, which glitters with those cheerful habitations of well-protected men, which is the busy seat of trade, and the gay scene of elegant amusements growing out of its prosperity, where there is the most cheerful face of industry, where there are riches overflowing, and everything that can delight a man who wishes to see the prosperity of a great community and a great empire, all this has been created by the industry and well-disciplined management of a handful of men since you were a boy."'

* These are the figures:—

In 1811	the population was	94,376; the number of houses	16,162
1821	,, ,,	118,972 ,, ,,	20,339
1831	,, ,,	205,572 ,, ,,	27,361
1841	,, ,,	286,487 ,, ,,	45,385
1851	,, ,,	376,065 ,, ,,	59,556
1861	,, ,,	437,740 ,, ,,	65,999

Very conspicuous amongst that handful of men were the Heywoods. Not much is to be said of them, however, save that they followed the tide of prosperity that began about the time of their birth, working zealously and, in their way, honestly and wisely, seizing every opportunity of advancement, and doing all they could to widen yet further the channels that, during their life-time had been widened to a wonderful extent. With them, and those who traded in their company, began the American cotton-trade, which was to assume marvellous proportions in the following generation. They also were sharers in the early efforts made by Liverpool to break down the monopoly of the East India Company and open its privileges to other ports than London. At a meeting of merchants held in January, 1768, it was proposed to buy from the Government a share in the India and China trade, and form a new Company, whose members might come from Liverpool and Bristol, Glasgow and Hull.* That project fell to the ground, but it led to later and more successful efforts. In it were associated both the Heywoods and the Earles. The Earles have worked on as merchants to the present day;† but the Heywoods, in due time, having amassed large fortunes by trade, proceeded to increase it yet further as bankers. In or just before the the year 1774, Arthur Heywood dissolved partnership with his brothers, and in company with his sons, Richard and Arthur, the one born in 1751, the other in 1753, established the bank of Arthur Heywood, Sons, and Company, now changed into the Consolidated Bank.‡ Benjamin Heywood was a merchant some fourteen years longer. But in 1788 he, too, turned banker, and established, in partnership with

* Baines, p. 441.

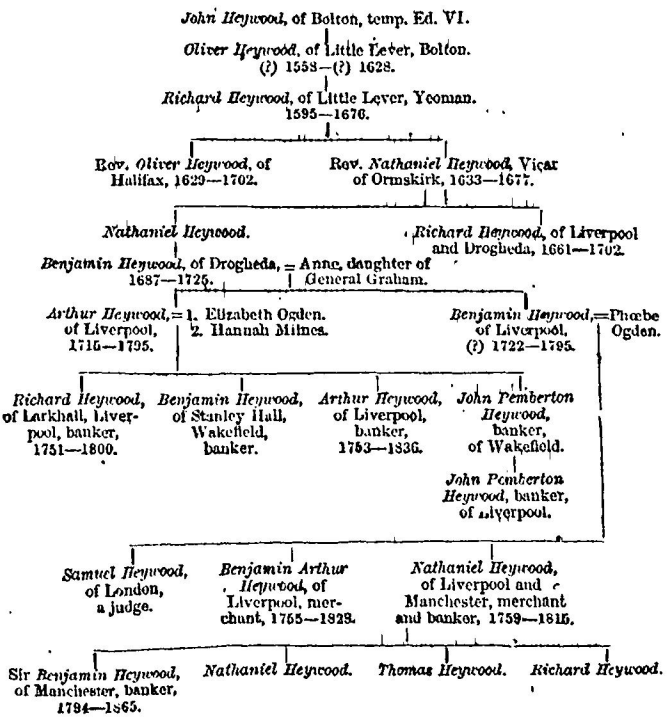
† Thomas Earle established a line of packets, from Liverpool to Leghorn, in 1772, and so greatly promoted Liverpool's trade with the Mediterranean ports. *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, December 4, 1772.

‡ On the 24th of June, 1774, Arthur Heywood, Sons, and Company, were, by royal proclamation, authorized to receive the light gold then in circulation, and exchange it for gold of full weight. *Ibid.*, July 8, 1774.

his sons, Benjamin Arthur and Nathaniel (at that time respectively thirty-three and twenty-nine years old), the Manchester firm of Benjamin Heywood, Sons, and Company, known as Heywood Brothers and Company from 1795 till 1828; and after that as Benjamin Heywood and Company till 1860, when it again assumed the title of Heywood Brothers and Company.

Arthur Heywood, being then eighty years old, died in Liverpool, on the 11th of February, 1795. His brother, Benjamin, died, at the age of seventy-three, on the 10th o August, in the same year.*

* This table shows the connection between the older Heywoods and the most notable of their later descendants:—



CHAPTER XX.

MATTHEW BOULTON OF BIRMINGHAM.

[1728-1809.]

BIRMINGHAM, 'the toy-shop of Europe,' as Burke called it, is supposed to have been one of the chief centres of iron manufacture during the Roman occupation of Britain. On one side of it, at Aston, a huge cinder-heap, having traces of a great antiquity, and evidently the accumulation of a great many generations, existed while the town was yet, as modern travellers thought, almost in its infancy; and on another, in Wednesbury Old Field, have been found hundreds of ancient coalpits, 'which the curious antiquarian would deem as long in sinking as the mountain of cinders in rising.'* It was a place of some repute in Anglo-Saxon times. In Domesday Book it was rated for four hides of land, and was half a mile in length and four furlongs wide, the whole being valued at twenty shillings. From Henry the Second, Peter de Birmingham, the lord of the manor, obtained permission to hold in it a weekly market, and his successor, William de Birmingham, procured charters from Henry the Third for two yearly fairs. In 1319 licence was given by Edward the Second for a toll to be levied on all commodities sold in the market during the next three years, in order that the streets might be paved; and, the funds thus raised being insufficient,

* HUTTON, *History of Birmingham*, 6th edition (Birmingham, 1835), p. 20.

a similar licence was given in 1337. By that means the work was done, and Birmingham, protected by its manorial lords, whose moated house was near the site of Saint Martin's Church, made steady progress down to the time of Henry the Eighth. 'The beauty of Birmingham, a good market town in the extreme parts of Warwickshire,' says the traveller who visited it in Henry's reign, 'is one street, going almost from the left bank of the brook up a mean hill by the length of a quarter of a mile. There be many smiths in the town, that use to make knives and all manner of cutting tools; and many lorimers that make bits, and a great many nailers; so that a great part of the town is maintained by smiths, who have their iron and sea-coal out of Staffordshire.'* A hundred years later, Birmingham was found to be 'full of inhabitants, and resounding with hammers and anvils, for the most part of them smiths.'†

In Charles the First's reign, Birmingham suffered for its sympathy with the Commonwealth party. In 1642, on Charles's departure, after a visit in which he received none of the help he sought, the inhabitants seized his carriages, and conveyed the plate that they found in them to Warwick Castle. For that Prince Rupert was sent next year with a company of horse to scour the country and damage the town. He fulfilled his commission with terrible success, and Birmingham had hardly recovered from its results when the plague of 1665 again brought trade almost to a standstill. With the Revolution, however, came a return of prosperity. A few years before the plague it is supposed the town contained about 5,000 inhabitants, living in fifteen streets, all of which converged towards the Old Cross in the centre of the town. By the year 1700 the streets had been increased to twenty-eight, and the population had been trebled. In 1731 there were, we are told, fifty-one streets and 23,286 inhabitants. In 1781 there were a hundred and twenty-five streets

* Leland, *Itinerary* (Oxford, 1744), vol. iv., p. 109.

† Camden, *Britannia.*

and 50,295 inhabitants. In 1801 there were two hundred and fifty streets and 73,670 inhabitants.* In 1861 the population of Birmingham had grown to 296,076.

From times unknown the Old Cross had been the great meeting-place of the merchants and manufacturers of Birmingham, the simple piece of stonework being renewed about once in every hundred years by the lords of the manor. In 1702 a solid building was set up to serve as an Exchange, until 1784, when it was pulled down, and the merchants removed to more commodious quarters.†

Already they had become too numerous for the little structure to hold them. Of ironworkers there were in the eighteenth century fewer perhaps than in earlier times; but the manufacturers of all sorts of articles constructed of iron and other metals were very much more numerous. The making of steel had been introduced in the seventeenth century by a family named Kettle, and the works set up in Steelhouse Lane soon had many rivals, devoted to the manufacture of needles, pens, and similar articles. Brassworks had been set up at about the same time by a family of Turners, and before the close of the eighteenth century a thousand tons of brass were converted in a year into commodities of which pins were the smallest and most plentiful. Before 1780 this trade was in the hands of a few rich men, 'who, instead of making the humble bow for favours received, acted with despotic sovereignty, established their own laws, chose their customers, directed the price, and governed the market.' In 1781 their arbitrary conduct led to some riotous opposition, and the establishment of a new and extensive manufactory, soon followed by others, in which the public interests were more consulted. Buckles were made in immense quantities, and the manufacture of buttons, in glass, horn, bone, pearl, steel, and all other sorts of substance, was so great, that by the end of the century it was divided into nearly sixty separate branches. Knives,

* Hutton, pp. 23, 37–41, 68, 69, 77. † *Ibid.*, p. 377.

tools, and fancy articles of every kind, were made in great abundance.

Birmingham was also famous for its guns. William the Third, soon after his accession, according to a tradition current in the town, once lamented that there were no guns manufactured in England, and that he was obliged to procure them from Holland at great expense and greater difficulty. "Sire," Sir Richard Newdigate, the member of Parliament for the county, is reported to have answered, "genius resides in Warwickshire, and I will answer for it that my constituents will answer your Majesty's wishes." Thereupon he posted down to Birmingham, conferred with a tradesman living in Digbeth, and obtained from him drafts and patterns, which so pleased the King when they were shown to him, that the tradesman was at once commissioned to make guns for the Government, and from that time the gun trade flourished in Birmingham.

But while other branches of industry were growing, there was no lessening of the old trade in nails and blacksmiths' work of various kinds. 'In 1741, when I first entered Birmingham,' says the old historian of the town, 'I was surprised at the number of blacksmiths' shops upon the road, and could not conceive how a county, though populous, could support so many people of the same occupation. In some of these shops I observed one or more females, stripped of their upper garments, and not overcharged with their lower, wielding the hammer with all the grace of their sex. The beauties of their faces was rather eclipsed by the smut of the anvil. Struck with the novelty, I inquired whether the ladies in this country shod horses, but was answered with a smile, "They are nailers."'*

In 1783, it was estimated there were in Birmingham

* Nearly all the foregoing account of Birmingham trade in the eighteenth century is drawn from HUTTON and his continuator, pp. 171–192. A full and very interesting account of the industrial history of the town has lately been published in *The Resources, Products, and Industrial History of*

three inhabitants worth upwards of 100,000*l.*, seven worth 50,000*l.*, eight worth 30,000*l.*, seventeen worth 20,000*l.*, eighty worth 10,000*l.*, and ninety-four worth 5,000*l.* Of these two hundred and nine 'a hundred and three began the world with nothing but their own prudence; thirty-five more had fortunes added to their prudence but too small to be brought into account; and seventy-one were favoured with a larger, which in many instances is much improved.'*

The man most conspicuous in the history of Birmingham commerce during the first half of the eighteenth century—dead before that guess at the wealth of Birmingham men in 1783 had been made—was John Taylor. "Him," said his foremost panegyrist, "we may justly term the Shakspeare or Newton of his day. He rose from minute beginnings to shine in the commercial atmosphere as they in the poetical and philosophical." He was born in 1714. In 1747 he served Birmingham as Low Bailiff. In 1756 he was Sheriff of the county of Warwick. Beginning life as a common labourer, he threw so much skill and energy into his work that he soon became master of a large establishment, which he directed with taste and tact hitherto unknown in Birmingham. He was a maker of buttons, buckles, snuff-boxes, and other fancy articles. A single workman earned seventy shillings a week in his shop from painting snuff-boxes for a farthing apiece. In his busiest years he manufactured 800*l.* worth of buttons every week, and he sold his shop-sweepings, containing quicksilver, brass scrapings, and the like, for 1,000*l.* a year. He also made ornamental clocks and toys of all sorts. A nobleman, buying several articles in his shop,

Birmingham and the Hardware District; a series of Reports collected by the Local Industries Committee of the British Association at Birmingham, in 1865; edited by SAMUEL TIMMINS (London, 1866).

* An estimate of the wealth of Birmingham in 1828, showing that sixteen of its inhabitants were worth about 4,000,000*l.* in all, that three hundred divided about 4,000,000*l.* more among them, and the rest 1,000,000*l.* was contributed to *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, by Mr. James Luckcock, on the 1st of September in that year.

among them one toy worth 80*l.*, is reported to have said that 'he plainly saw he could not live in Birmingham for less than 200*l.* a day,' so many were the temptations offered by the shops, among which Taylor's was the most conspicuous. It was Taylor who, in 1761, brought under Josiah Wedgwood's notice Plumier's *Art de Tourner*, and so helped him in the development of his pottery-works. To Taylor, also, Wedgwood owed his introduction to William Cox, the clever mechanic, whose ready wit enabled him to apply to his craft the engine-lathe devised by Plumier; and there is evidence of much other help given by the great button-maker to the great potter. In 1765, with a Mr. Lloyd for his partner, John Taylor established the first, and for a long time the greatest, bank in Birmingham, known by the name of Taylor and Lloyd. He died in 1775, leaving upwards of 200,000*l.*, in the bank and in the manufactory, to his son and successor.*

But a much greater man, the one great merchant prince that Birmingham can boast of—its father, as he has well been called, and the leader of nearly every good work that has been done to it, was Matthew Boulton.

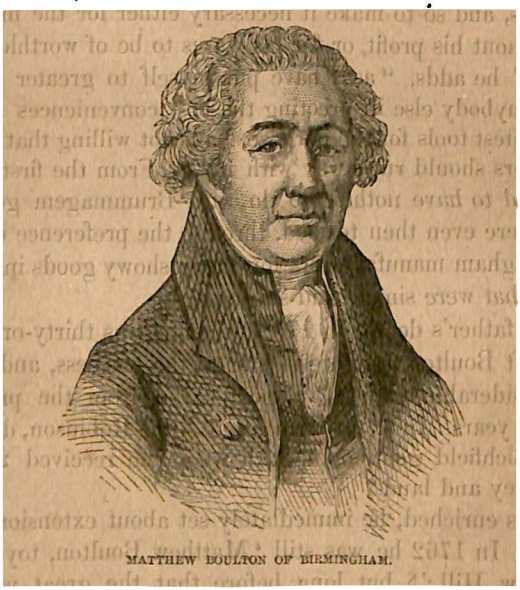
He was born at Birmingham on the 3rd of September, 1728.† John Boulton, his grandfather, was a native of Northamptonshire, where there had been farmers of his name for many generations. In the days of William the Third, this John Boulton was living at Lichfield, married to a wife who had brought him a fair amount of wealth; but not so rich that he did not think it well to send his son Matthew to Birmingham, there, on Snow Hill, to become a silver stamper and piecer. That was the trade in which Matthew Boulton the younger received his apprenticeship, after brief schooling in the private academy of a Mr. Ansted

* Hutton, pp. 169, 174, 201, 219, 222; Meteyard, *Life of Josiah Wedgwood*, vol. i., pp. 288, 339. All men did not think well of Taylor. "John Taylor died the other day, worth 200,000*l.*," wrote James Watt to Matthew Boulton, "without ever doing one generous action."—Smiles, *Lives of Boulton and Watt*, p. 332.

† *European Magazine*, vol. lvi., p. 163.

at Deritend, to which he added much in later years, working at Latin and French as a duty, and finding his chief delight in mathematics and drawing, mechanics and chemistry.*

Very soon young Boulton became master of the business in which he had been trained. Before he was seventeen years old he had added watch-chain, button, and buckle making to the silver stamping. The inlaid steel buckles that in the year 1745 began to be largely imported from France, as French



MATTHEW BOULTON OF BIRMINGHAM.

manufacture, were of his invention, great quantities of them being actually made in his father's shop and sent to the Continent for re-shipment.† As soon as he was twenty-one he was a recognized partner in the business, and henceforth he was its real head. Signing for 'father and self,' he ordered

* *European Magazine*, vol. lvi. SMILES, *Lives of Boulton and Watt* (London, 1865), pp. 163, 164. My great obligations to Mr. Smiles's work will appear from the frequent references to it in the following pages.

† *European Magazine*, vol. lvi., p. 163.

everything as he chose. In 1757, for instance, writing to Benjamin Huntsman, of Sheffield, about the cast steel that he had lately invented, he says, "When thou hast some of a proper size and quality for me, and an opportunity of sending it, thou may'st, but I should be glad to have it a little tougher than the last."* In the same year, in a letter to Timothy Holles, of London, he complains of the attempts made by some to beat down the price of coat-links and vest buttons, and so to make it necessary either for the maker to go without his profit, or for his wares to be of worthless stuff. "Yet," he adds, "as I have put myself to greater expense than anybody else in erecting the best conveniences and the completest tools for the purpose, I am not willing that any interlopers should run away with it."† From the first he was resolved to have nothing to do with Brummagem goods, as they were even then termed, through the preference of many Birmingham manufacturers for cheap showy goods instead of those that were simple and substantial.

His father's death, in 1759, when he was thirty-one years old, left Boulton absolute master of the business, and also of a considerable sum of money, saved from the profits of former years. In 1760 he married Anne Robinson, daughter of a Lichfield gentleman, with whom he received 28,000*l.* in money and land.‡

Thus enriched, he immediately set about extension of his trade. In 1762 he was still 'Matthew Boulton, toy-maker, of Snow Hill;'§ but long before that the great works at Soho had been begun. To Soho, a dreary Staffordshire heath, with Hockley Brook running through it, at that time two miles distant from the town of Birmingham,

* Smiles, p. 165. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

§ This curious little document is quoted by Mr. Smiles, p. 167: "Received of Matthew Boulton, toymaker, Snow Hill, three shillings and sixpence, for which sum I solemnly engage, if he should be chosen by lot to serve in the militia for this parish, at the first meeting for that purpose, to procure a substitute that shall be approved of. Birmingham, January 11, 1762.—Henry Brookes, Sergeant."

Boulton was attracted by a mill lately set up by one Edward Ruston. Ruston had leased the ground from the lord of the manor in 1756, with permission to widen the brook in one place so as to form a pool, and thus enable him to work his mill. He had spent 1,000*l.* in effecting these changes when Boulton bought up his lease—ultimately purchasing the fee simple from the original proprietor—and at once proceeded to build a very much larger mill, with vast workshops adjoining, and a handsome house in the neighbourhood. The buildings and their furniture cost more than 20,000*l.** By the end of 1762 they were completed, and taken into use by a transfer of the principal part of the business from Snow Hill. At the stock-taking incident thereto, the manager of the works and nine subordinates were engaged through eight days in weighing and counting the goods and preparing an inventory. "I founded my manufactory," wrote Boulton in 1790 to Lord Hawkesbury, "upon one of the most barren commons in England, where there existed but a few miserable huts, filled with idle beggarly people, who, by help of the common land and a little thieving, made shift to live without working. The scene is now entirely changed. I have employed a thousand men, women, and children in my aforesaid manufactory for nearly thirty years past. The lord of the manor hath exterminated those very poor cottages, and hundreds of clean, comfortable, cheerful houses are found erected in their place."†

Boulton's business at this time comprised the old trade in buttons, buckles, watch-chains, and similar articles, with the addition of all sorts of filagree and inlaid work. Very soon after, if not already, it was further extended to the manufacture of solid silver and plated goods—Boulton being the introducer of the silver-plated business into Birmingham—

* Hutton, pp. 395, 396; *European Magazine*, vol. lvi. p. 163; Swinney's *Birmingham Directory* (1774); Smiles, p. 168.

† Smiles, pp. 168, 169.

of candlesticks, urns, brackets, ormolu wares, and the like.* On entering his new premises, Boulton took as his partner one John Fothergill, a gentleman of small means, but steady, shrewd, and well acquainted with the European markets. It was Fothergill's duty to superintend the foreign trade, to establish agencies in all parts of the Continent, and to make careful study of all foreign inventions and appliances, with a view to their introduction, if desirable, at Soho. Boulton took on himself the direct supervision of the works, besides doing all he could to extend business relations in all the great towns of England. He also made it his special business, as it was by nature his great delight, to forward the artistic development of his craft. "The prejudice that Birmingham hath so justly established against itself," he said, in a letter to Fothergill, "makes every fault conspicuous in all articles that have the least pretensions to taste. How can I expect the public to countenance rubbish from Soho, while they can procure sound and perfect work from any other quarter?" †

Boulton was determined that the taste and excellence of everything produced at Soho should be in advance of public opinion instead of behind it. With that end he bought, or borrowed and had copied, all sorts of works of art, making interest with noblemen and monarchs, searching public galleries and private treasure-houses, at Windsor, at Strawberry Hill, in out-of-the-way country seats, and in distant corners of Europe. "I wish," he wrote to his partner, about some candlesticks and vases that he had borrowed of Queen Charlotte, "Mr. Eginton would take good casts from the Hercules and the Hydra. I perceive we shall want many such figures, and therefore we should omit no opportunity of taking good casts." ‡ "If, in the course of your

* "The number of ingenious mechanical contrivances they avail themselves of, by means of water-mills, much facilitates their work, and saves a great portion of time and labour."—SWINNEY'S *Birmingham Directory* (1774).

† SMILES, p. 170. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

future travelling," we read in another letter, addressed in July, 1767, to an agent in Italy, "you can pick up for me any metallic ores or fossil substances, or any other curious natural productions, I should be much obliged to you, as I am fond of all those things that have a tendency to improve my knowledge in mechanical arts, in which my manufactory will every year become more and more general; and therefore wish to know the taste, the fashions, the toys, both useful and ornamental, the implements, vessels, &c., that prevail in all the different parts of Europe, as I should be glad to work for all Europe in all things that they may have occasion for—gold, silver, copper, plated, gilt, pinchbeck, steel, platina, tortoiseshell, or anything else that may become an article of general demand." *

It was, indeed, almost a fault of Boulton's that he was anxious to include in his business anything and everything likely to be 'of general demand.' To Josiah Wedgwood, just then following the example of Soho in the establishment of Etruria, he said "he almost wished to be a potter," and he seems to have had some thought of adding pottery manufactures to his many other occupations. At first Wedgwood was alarmed and annoyed thereat.† But he soon changed his opinion on the subject. "Stand firm, my friend," he wrote to his partner Bentley in September, 1769, "and let us support this threatened attack like veterans prepared for every knock or change of fortune that can befall us. If we must fall, if Etruria cannot stand its ground, but must give way to Soho and fall before her, let us not sell the victory too cheap, but maintain our ground like men, and endeavour, even in our defeat, to share the laurels with our conquerors. It doubles my courage to have the first manufacturer in England to encounter with. The match likes me well. I like the man, I like his spirit. He will not be a mere drivelling copyist like the antagonists I have hitherto had, but will venture to step out of the lines upon occasion and

* Smiles, p. 172. † Meteyard, *Life of Wedgwood*, vol. ii., p. 76.

afford us some diversion in the combat."* But there was never any real competition between the two great manufacturers. Boulton soon contented himself with admiring his friend's ware, and supplementing it with metal work of his own. "The mounting of vases," he said, in a letter to Wedgwood, "is a large field for fancy, in which I shall indulge, as I perceive it possible to convert even a very ugly vessel into a beautiful vase."†

In those ways Boulton worked on for several years, inventing for himself and applying the inventions of others, winning a great deal of fame in all quarters of the world, but sometimes finding that his expensive and elaborate workmanship brought him in more praise than profit. Among his favourite productions were some wonderfully-wrought astronomical clocks. "I find philosophy at a low ebb in London," he wrote in 1767, in a letter to his wife, "and have therefore brought back my two fine clocks, which I will send to a market where common sense is not quite out of fashion." The market in this case, strange to say, was Russia, whose Empress Catherine not only bought the clocks, but purchased a great many other articles from Soho, and was a steady patroness of Boulton. "If I had made the clocks play jigs upon bells, and a dancing bear keeping time," he continued, in his complaint of the London buyers, "or if I had made a horse race upon their faces, I believe they would have had better bidders."‡

Yet Boulton had many friends and admirers in London. "The King," he said, in the same letter, "hath bought a pair of cassolets, a Titus, a Venus clock, and some other things. I was with them—the Queen and all the children—between two and three hours. There were, likewise, many of the nobility present. Never was man so much complimented as I have been; but I find that compliments don't make fat nor fill the pocket." "I am to wait upon their

* Meteyard, *Life of Wedgwood*, vol. ii., p. 213.
† Smiles, p. 173. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

Majesties again," he wrote, a few weeks later, "so soon as our tripod tea-kitchen arrives, and again upon some other business. The Queen is extremely sensible, very affable, and a great patroness of English manufactures. Of this she gave me a particular instance; for after the King and she had talked to me for nearly three hours, they withdrew, and then the Queen sent for me into her boudoir, showed me her chimney-piece, and asked me how many vases it would take to furnish it. 'For,' said she, 'all that china shall be taken away.' She also desired that I would fetch her the two finest steel chains I could make. All this she did of her own accord, without the presence of the King, which I could not help putting a kind construction upon."*

George the Third and Queen Charlotte were good friends to the English manufacturers, and their patronage was very helpful in encouraging a taste for solid and artistic workmanship among the great buyers of London. In 1765 Boulton's friend, Josiah Wedgwood, had been commissioned to make a tea-service for the Queen; and that order followed by other orders for the Court and the attendant courtiers, was the beginning of his great fame. He soon set about the establishment of Etruria, and, applying the wisdom that had come to him through many previous years of patient study, effected an entire revolution in the trade which, as far as England was concerned, in his hands first became artistic.

In the meanwhile Matthew Boulton, quite as zealous as Wedgwood for the development of his trade in artistic ways, was making rapid progress. In 1763 he sold goods which brought him in 7,000*l.* In 1767 his gross income was 30,000*l.* In 1770 he had from seven to eight hundred skilled artizans working at Soho—"the largest hardware manufactory in the world," as he himself called it—in metals and stones, glass, enamel, and tortoiseshell. "I have almost every machine," he wrote in that year, "that is applicable to these arts. I have two water-mills employed in rolling, polishing, grinding,

* Smiles, p. 175.

and turning various sorts of lathes. I have trained up many, and am training up more, plain country lads into good workmen, and wherever I find indications of skill and ability, I encourage them. I have likewise established correspondence with almost every mercantile town in Europe, and am thus regularly supplied with orders for the grosser articles in common demand, by which I am enabled to employ such a number of hands as to provide me with an ample choice of artists for the finer branches of work; and I am thereby encouraged to erect and employ a more extensive apparatus than it would be prudent to provide for the production of the finer articles only." Two years later he said, "We have a thousand mouths to feed, and it has taken so much labour and pains to get so valuable and well-organized a staff of workmen together, that the operations of the manufactory must be carried on at whatever risk."*

At a good deal of risk Boulton's works were carried on through many years. His large profits were more than absorbed by his various projects for improvement of machinery and extension of the higher branches of trade. All his own and all his wife's money was locked up in the business, and large sums had to be borrowed from his friends. This fettered him considerably, and seems to have been the chief reason for his delay in entering on a new sphere of business in partnership with Watt.

James Watt, born at Greenock on the 19th of February, 1736, had, in 1754, been put to learn mathematical instrument making in Glasgow. There, after a short and unsuccessful stay in London, he had started business on his own account, near the end of 1756. His shop, within the walls of Glasgow University, soon became a favourite resort both of students and of professors. He made quadrants and mathematical instruments of all sorts. He also made and mended musical instruments, from flutes to organs. He even sold maps, charts, and books. But his natural timidity stood

* Smiles, pp. 177, 179, 180.

in the way of success, and left him plenty of time for more congenial pursuits, for learned intercourse with the mathematicians and philosophers of Glasgow, and above all, for working out the idea that had been cherished by him from the time when, as a little boy, his aunt had scolded him for wasting a whole hour in taking off the lid of the kettle and putting it on again, 'holding now a cup and now a silver spoon over the steam, watching how it rose from the spout, catching and counting the drops it fell into.' In 1761 or 1762 he began fairly to apply himself to the subject, studying all that had been written about steam and its employment as a motive power, and speculating as to the further and greater uses to which it might be put. By 1765 his invention of the steam-engine was virtually completed.*

About that time, also, Boulton began to think of producing something of the same sort. "The enormous expense of the horse-power," we read in one of his letters, "put me upon thinking of turning the mill by fire, and I made many fruitless experiments on the subject." In 1766 his fresh experiments were so far successful that Benjamin Franklin, then in London, and his agent in the construction of a model, Erasmus Darwin, and others—all ignorant of the discovery already made by the unambitious tradesman of Glasgow—assured him of his ultimate triumph.† But in 1767 Watt visited London, and on his way home he called at Soho. Boulton was absent, and so lost the advantage of a personal account of Watt's machine. Next year, however, Watt was again at Birmingham, and then he met with Boulton. "I had much conversation with him," he said, "on the subject of the Soho manufactures. He explained to me many things of which I had been before ignorant. On my part I explained to him my invention of the steam-engine,

* The story of Watt's invention has been told often enough; most fully in Mr. MUIRHEAD'S *Origin and Progress of the Inventions of James Watt* (London, 1854), and *Life of James Watt* (London, 1858); most clearly and concisely in Mr. SMILES'S *Lives of Boulton and Watt*.

† SMILES, pp. 182–184.

and several other schemes of which my head was then full, in the success of which he expressed a friendly interest. My stay at Birmingham at that time was short, but I afterwards kept up a correspondence with Mr. Boulton through our mutual friend Dr. Small."*

Dr. Small was a Scotchman, six years younger than Boulton, who went from college to be a physician and professor of mathematics in Williamsburg College, Virginia. There, after some years' residence, his health failed, and he determined to settle in England. In 1765 Franklin sent him to Birmingham with a letter of introduction to Boulton, in which he described him as "one who is both an ingenious philosopher and a most worthy, honest man."† So Boulton found him. He often took his advice, and sometimes adopted his inventions in the Soho works; and it was chiefly at his instigation that he ultimately entered into partnership with Watt.

Therein, however, there was a delay of several years. This was partly caused by the circumstance of Boulton being already perplexed by the number and variety of his engagements, and the great expense to which they put him; but much more by the fact that Watt was already in partnership with Dr. Roebuck, a native of Birmingham, and an old friend of Boulton's, but long since settled in Glasgow, and founder there of the Carron Iron-works. The world owes much to Roebuck, and no one was readier than Boulton to admit his talents, his honesty, and his generosity. But he was too rash a speculator for any prudent man to intrust with his fortune. In January, 1768, Small had written to Watt, saying that he and Boulton would gladly join with him if he would come to Birmingham.‡ Both Watt and Roebuck were eager for the partnership; but they wished to stay in Glasgow. Therefore Boulton withdrew his offer. "I was excited by two motives," he said, in a letter to Watt, dated the 7th of February, 1769,

* Muirhead, *Inventions of Watt*, vol. i., pp. cxlvii., cxlviii.
† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. cliii. ‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 17.

"to offer you my assistance, which were, love of you, and love of a money-getting, ingenious project. I presumed that your engine would require money, very accurate workmanship, and extensive correspondence, to make it turn out to the best advantage, and that the best means of keeping up the reputation, and doing the invention justice, would be to keep the executive part out of the hands of the multitude of empirical engineers, who, from ignorance, want of experience, and want of necessary convenience, would be very liable to produce bad and inaccurate workmanship; all which deficiencies would affect the reputation of the invention. To remedy which, and to produce the most profit, my idea was to settle a manufactory near to my own, by the side of our canal, where I would erect all the conveniences necessary for the completion of engines, and from which manufactory we would serve all the world with engines of all sizes. By these means and your assistance we could engage and instruct some excellent workmen, who, with more excellent tools than would be worth any man's while to procure for one single engine, could execute the invention twenty per cent. cheaper than it could be otherwise executed, and with as great a difference of accuracy as there is between the blacksmith and the mathematical instrument maker. What led me to drop the hint I did to you was the possessing an idea that you wanted a midwife to ease you of your burden, and to introduce your brat into the world, which I should not have thought of if I had known of your pre-engagement; but as I am determined never to embark in any trade that I have not the inspection of myself, and as my engagements here will not permit me to attend any business in Scotland, and as I am almost saturated with undertakings, I think I must conclude to ——; no, you shall draw the conclusion. Yet nevertheless, let my conclusions be what they will, nothing will alter my inclinations for being concerned with you, or for rendering you all the service in my power; and although there seem to be some obstructions in the engine-trade, yet I live in hopes that you

or I may hit upon some scheme or other that may associate us in this part of the world, which would render it still more agreeable to me than it is by the acquisition of such a neighbour."*

The partnership was delayed five years longer, Watt in the intermediate time doing all he could to perfect his invention and bring it before the world, but finding serious hindrance to his project in Roebuck's embarrassments and his own shortness of money; and Boulton waiting patiently for the steam-engine to be completed, in order that he might make use of it at Soho. In the summer of 1768, Robison, the Glasgow professor, and one of Watt's most intimate friends, visited Birmingham, and was taken by Boulton over his 'magnificent works,' as he called them. 'As we walked through a yard,' wrote the Scotchman, 'he drew me aside and said, "Does Mr. Watt seriously mean to apply for a patent?" I answered, "Yes, most certainly, in conjunction with Dr. Roebuck." "Why then," said he, "I will stop that work," pointing to some brick pillars which lay on the other side of a large watercourse or ditch—"I am about erecting a steam-engine, very unlike what you describe, but where I should have availed myself of what I learnt from Mr. Watt's conversation; but this would not be right without his consent."'†

Watt was willing enough that Boulton should make an engine for himself, and so help to bring the invention before the public; but Boulton thought it more business-like to wait, and he waited in vain until the spring of 1774. By that time Roebuck's difficulties had become so overwhelming that he consented to make over his share in Watt's project to Boulton in liquidation of a long-standing debt, and it was agreed that the work should be transferred to Birmingham. That was very much to the satisfaction of Watt. "I begin now to see daylight," he wrote to Small on the 9th of April, 1774.‡

* Muirhead, vol. i., pp. 41–43. † *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. cl.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 77.

In May Watt went to live in Birmingham, and steps were at once taken by Boulton for the erection of suitable works at Soho, in which skilled workmen should carry out the inventor's instructions of Watt. "The fire-engine I have invented is now going, and answers much better than any other that has yet been made," Watt wrote to his father, still living at Greenock, on the 11th of December, "and I expect that the invention will be very beneficial to me."*

The benefit was not at once apparent. Watt's patent for fourteen years had been obtained in 1769. More than five years had been spent and very little had been done. Ten years had yet to pass before the business was remunerative. Through that long time, amid all sorts of opposition from strangers and rivals, and troubles arising from defects of machinery and incompetence of workpeople, Boulton and Watt worked on very patiently and very zealously. The machines were the best that could be made in those days—days of infancy for all mechanical contrivances—and the workmen were the most skilled and intelligent that could be obtained. From the first, indeed, Boulton's workpeople were famous for their superiority over their fellows, and one of his difficulties arose from the eagerness of other masters to tempt them over to their employ. But for all that the hindrances were great, and they had tedious up-hill work for years. People were slow in buying engines, and when they had bought them, they or their servants were often stubborn and careless, so that accidents were occasioned, and good work had to be repeated needlessly and to nobody's profit. In all sorts of ways the concern was burdened and the action of its promoters was restrained.

Boulton's first care, after arranging for the establishment of the works at Soho, was to send Watt to London, there to use interest for obtaining an Act of Parliament which should secure the patent-right for four-and-twenty years more. In that he succeeded, after much opposition, by the end of May, 1775.†

* Muirhead, vol. ii., p. 79. † Smiles, pp. 207–212.

A deed of partnership between Boulton and Watt was therefore drawn up, and no time was lost in completing the works and canvassing for orders. "In the name of God," said Boulton, in a letter to his partner, "fall to and do your best."* Both men worked with wonderful energy. All Boulton's friends—and he had many in every county in England, who regarded him as about the most honest and trustworthy manufacturer then living—were canvassed for orders, and soon there was as much business to be done as they were able to get through.

Several orders came from Cornwall; and, as special difficulties in the use of the engines occurred there, while it was specially important that they should be favourably introduced into the great mining district, Watt paid many tedious visits to the west of England. He found many difficulties to overcome, and much ignorance had to be removed before the enterprise could prosper. "All the world are agape to see what it can do," he wrote to Boulton from Chasewater, on the arrival of an engine in September, 1777. "The velocity, violence, magnitude, and horrible noise of the engine," he added, a few weeks later, "give universal satisfaction to all beholders, believers or not. I have once or twice trimmed the engine to end its stroke gently, and to make less noise; but Mr. Wilson"—the superintendent of the mine—"cannot sleep without it, and seems quite furious, so I have left it to the engine-men; and, by-the-by, the noise seems to convey great ideas of its power to the ignorant, who seem to be no more taken with modest merit in an engine than in a man."†

The foolish liking naturally led to opposition as foolish. "Almost the whole county is against us," Watt wrote, in the spring of 1782, "and look upon us as oppressors and tyrants, from whose power they believe the horned imps of Satan are to relieve them."‡ In that strain he often wrote. The press and worry of business perplexed him. "I fancy,"

* Smiles, p. 218. † *Ibid.*, p. 236. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

we read in one letter, "that I must be cut in pieces, and a portion sent to every tribe in Israel."* "The care and attention which our business requires," he complained in another, "make me at present dread a fresh order with as much horror as other people with joy receive one. What signifies it to a man though he gain the whole world, if he lose his health and his life? The first of these losses has already befallen me, and the second will probably be the consequence of it, without some favourable circumstances, which at present I cannot foresee, should prevent it."† "Solomon said that in the increase of knowledge there is increase of sorrow," he said elsewhere; "if he had substituted *business* for knowledge, it would have been perfectly true."‡

Boulton loved business as much as his friend loathed it. But he, too, often found it hard to hold up his head against the troubles that pressed upon him during the first ten years of his partnership with Watt. The heavy expenses to which the firm was put compelled him to seek money in every direction, to borrow of all his friends, and even then to resort to various expedients for the warding off of bankruptcy. His wife's property was mortgaged; his own was in great measure sold. Money was raised on security of the steam-engine royalties, the works at Soho, and all other available property. Money was also obtained, on personal security, from Thomas Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton*, and many other intimate acquaintances.

The greatest strain came from the steam-engine business, conducted by the new firm of Boulton and Watt; but, owing partly to the extreme attention paid to that business, the old hardware and "toy"-making firm of Boulton and Fothergill was found, during the eighteen years prior to 1780, to have had an excess of losses over profits to the extent of 11,000*l.*§ Nor was this all. Over and over again Watt's patent rights were threatened or infringed; and great expense, of money

* Smiles, p. 237.
† *Ibid.*, p. 269.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 363.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

and of time, had to be incurred in legal action, Parliamentary influence, and the like. Yet Boulton persevered. He knew that, if the worst should happen, there would be assets for the full payment of every debt, and that, therefore, there was no dishonesty in continuance of the enterprise; and he never doubted that, in the long run, it would bring wealth to himself and his partner, and be of incalculable benefit to the nation.

In due time Watt, and all his other friends, acknowledged that he was right. Previous to 1785 the engine manufactory cost more than it earned, but from that time the tide changed. Watt, till now supported by an allowance from Boulton, received from 6,000*l.* to 7,000*l.* in 1787, as his first share of the profits,* and every later year brought him an ample income. Boulton also was a rich man at last.

In the ensuing years of their prosperity, as in the many previous years of their perplexities, they were cheered by the society of some friends who contributed to make the Birmingham of eighty years ago famous as a centre of literature and science. Boulton and Watt were men of no common mind; they gathered round them others of rare intelligence and wisdom.

Of these, not quite the earliest, but the first to go, was Dr. Small. He died, hardly more than forty years of age, in February, 1775, less than a year after Watt's settlement in Birmingham. "I have this evening bid adieu to our once good and virtuous friend for ever and ever," wrote Boulton to Watt, then in London. "If there were not a few other objects yet remaining for me to settle my affections upon, I should wish also to take up my lodgings in the mansions of the dead."† Boulton's sorrow was real and deep. "No man ever enjoyed, or deserved more the esteem of mankind," said Captain James Keir. "Mr. Boulton and myself, who were more particularly blessed with his intimacy and friendship, loved him with the tenderest affection, and

* Smiles, p. 363. † Muirhead, *Life of Watt*, p. 248.

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shall ever revere his memory."* Boulton showed his reverence by erecting, in the prettiest and most retired part of his garden, a monument to his friend. "'Tis a sepulchral grove," he said, "in which is a building adapted for contemplation. From one of its windows, under a Gothic arch formed by trees, you see the church in which he was interred, and no other object whatsoever, except the monument."†

James Keir himself was one of Boulton's earliest and dearest friends. Watt called him "a mighty chemist and a very agreeable man."‡ In partnership with Boulton and Watt, he conducted an establishment for making letter-copying machines of the sort now in general use.§ He was also author of several tracts and treatises on chemistry, and biographer of Thomas Day, who, with Dr. Withering, the botanist, and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, helped to make famous the society of Birmingham in Boulton's day. Yet more famous among the number were Josiah Wedgwood, who often came over from his Burslem potteries; Erasmus Darwin, who, living at Lichfield, made Birmingham almost his literary home; and Joseph Priestley, who resided in the town from 1780 to the miserable riot-year of 1791. "I consider my settlement at Birmingham," wrote Priestley, "as the happiest event in my life, being highly favourable to every object I had in view, philosophical or theological. I had the convenience of good workmen of every kind, and the society of persons eminent for their knowledge of chemistry, particularly Mr. Watt, Mr. Keir, and Dr. Withering. These, with Mr. Boulton and Dr. Darwin, who soon left us by removing from Lichfield to Derby, Mr. Galton, and, afterwards, Mr. Johnson, of Kenilworth, and myself, dined together every month, calling ourselves the Lunar Society, because the time of our meeting was near the full moon, in order to have the benefit of its light in returning home."‖

* Muirhead, *Life of Watt*, p. 252. † *Ibid.*, pp. 252, 254.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 178. § Smiles, p. 262.
‖ *Memoirs of* Dr. Priestley, *by Himself*, cited by Muirhead, *Life of Watt*, p. 392.

The history of this Lunar Society is full of interest. Originated, as it is supposed, by Dr. Small, it seems to have had an ill-defined existence for some years, generally meeting at Boulton's house on Handsworth Heath, before 1776, when it was established in an orderly way. "Pray remember," wrote Boulton to Watt, in the February of that year, "that the celebration of the third full moon will be on Saturday, March the 3rd. Darwin and Keir will both be at Soho. I then propose to submit many motions to the members respecting new laws and regulations, such as will tend to prevent the decline of a society which I hope will be lasting."* Reorganized at that time, the Lunar Society had healthy life for fifteen years more, and continued in existence upwards of twenty years after that. At its meetings were propounded and discussed some of the most memorable inventions and discoveries of modern times. At first Darwin and Boulton were its most energetic members. Darwin's increased duties at Lichfield, and his subsequent removal to Derby, lessened his share, though not his interest, in its deliberations.† His place was soon taken by Watt. "I beg," wrote Watt to Darwin on the 3rd of January, 1781, "that you would impress on your memory the idea that you promised to dine with sundry men of learning at my house on Monday next, and that you will realize that

* Smiles, p. 368. The chapter in which Mr. Smiles sketches the history of the Lunar Society, though far too short, gives a fuller account of its operations than is to be met with anywhere else.

† "Dear Boulton," wrote Darwin from Lichfield, in April, 1778, "I am sorry the infernal divinities who visit mankind with diseases, and are, therefore, at perpetual war with doctors, should have prevented my seeing all your great men at Soho to-day. Lord! what inventions, what wit, what rhetoric, metaphysical, mechanical, and pyrotechnical, will be on the wing, bandied like a shuttle-cock from one to another of your troop of philosophers! while poor I, I by myself, I, imprisoned in a postchaise, am joggled and jostled and bumped and bruised along the King's highroad, to make war upon a stomach-ache or a fever!" "I am here," he wrote from Derby, in 1782, "cut off from the milk of science which flows in such redundant streams from your learned lunatics, and which, I can assure you, is a very great regret to me."—Smiles, pp. 369, 370.

idea. There is a new book to cut up, and it is to be determined whether or not heat is a compound of phlogiston and empyreal air, and whether a mirror can reflect the heat of the fire. If you are meek and humble, perhaps you may be told what light is made of, and also how to make it, and the theory proved both by synthesis and analysis."* "You know," said Darwin in reply, three days later, "there is a perpetual war' carried on between the devil and holy men. Sometimes one prevails in an odd skirmish or so, and sometimes the other. Now, you must know this said devil has played me a slippery trick, and, I fear, prevented me from coming to join the holy men at your house, by sending the measles amongst nine beautiful children of Lord Paget's. For I must suppose it is a work of the devil. Surely the Lord could never think of amusing himself by setting nine innocent little animals to cough their hearts up! Pray ask your learned society if this partial evil contributes to any public good; if this pain is necessary to establish the subordination, or different links, in the chain of animation. If one was to be weaker and less perfect than another, must he therefore have pain as a part of his portion? Pray inquire of your philosophers, and rescue me from Manicheeism. As to material philosophy, I can tell you some secrets in return for yours, namely, that atmospheric air is composed of light and the earth of water (aqueous earth); that water is composed of aqueous gas, which is displaced from its earth by oil of vitriol."†

In that playful talk there was a foreshadowing of the discovery soon to be made, separately or jointly, by at least two members of the Lunar Society, of the composition and constituents of water. Whether the discovery was first made by Watt or Priestley, by Cavendish or by Lavoisier, does not concern us. Certain it is that this and all sorts of other questions were exciting general attention during the last

* Muirhead, *Inventions of Watt*, vol. ii., p. 124.
† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 124.

quarter of the eighteenth century, and nowhere more than among the members of the Lunar Society. Even Matthew Boulton was turning aside from his numerous manufacturing concerns to conduct elaborate chemical experiments, and his friend Wedgwood sought amusement in similar ways. But Priestley was the greatest chemist. Long before his removal to Birmingham, at Warrington and at Leeds, he had thought shrewdly and written learnedly on various matters of great scientific interest, and to him was in great measure due, not only the quickened attention given to those matters by the Lunar Society, but also the reconstruction of experimental science and the introduction of scientific influences into what was previously considered the sole domain of theology, in the world at large.

The Lunar Society lost its greatest member through the Birmingham riots of 1791, immediately provoked by Priestley's sympathy for the leaders of the French Revolution. "About eight o'clock, on the fourteenth of July," said Watt, in a letter to one of his friends, "a mob assembled, pulled down two dissenting meeting-houses, then Dr. Priestley's house, which they razed to the ground, he and his family making their escape in time. They then destroyed a very good house in town, and some of the best houses in the country, mostly belonging to dissenters, they say to the number of ten or fifteen, and to the amount of above 100,000*l*. Then was the sovereignty of the people established in full authority for three days and nights! Quiet subjects were panic-struck; and after some feeble efforts to establish peace, people submitted quietly to their fate. We, on our part"—that is, at Soho—"finding there was no likelihood of any other protection, applied to our workmen, convinced them of the criminality, as well as imprudence, of joining the mob, and kept them all at home, procured some arms, and had their promise of defending us and themselves against all invaders. Though our principles—which are well known as friends to the established government and enemies

to republican principles—should have been our protection from a mob whose watchword was 'Church and King,' yet our safety was principally owing to most of the dissenters living on the south of the town; for, after the first moments, they did not seem very nice in their discriminations of religion or principles. I, among others, was pointed out as a Presbyterian, though I never was in a meeting-house in Birmingham, and Mr. Boulton is well known as a Churchman."*

Both Boulton and Watt did their utmost, by writing letters of sympathy and by substantial presents, as Priestley said himself, "to set up a broken philosopher."† The last present reached him at Northumberland, in Pennsylvania, whither he had gone, after a few years of uncomfortable residence in London, in 1795. Thence, on the 17th of of October, 1801, he wrote to his old friends:—"I cannot express how much I think myself obliged to you for the noble present you have made me of a furnace and other apparatus for making large quantities of air. I have had it only a few days, and I find it, in all respects, to exceed my expectations. In this state of exile from my native country, and the friends that I most value, I am happy to have the means of prosecuting my experiments; but everything that I make use of, substances as well as instruments, must be had from England, and, consequently, at a great expense. I am truly thankful to my friends for lessening this expense." Priestley ended his letter "with every good wish to all the members of the Lunar Society, the advantages of which," he said, "I most feelingly find the want of."‡ The good man

* Muirhead, vol ii., pp. 241, 242. † *Ibid.*, vol. ii., pp. 243, 244.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii., pp. 275–277. "There are few things that I more regret, in consequence of my removal from Birmingham," he had written in 1793, "than the loss of your society. It both encouraged and enlightened me, so that what I did there of a philosophical kind ought, in justice, to be attributed almost as much to you as to myself. From our cheerful meetings I never absented myself voluntarily, and from my pleasing recollections then will never be absent. . . . Philosophy engrossed us wholly. Politicians

died on the 6th of February, 1804, at the age of seventy, leaving Matthew Boulton his executor and trustee for his daughter.* Most of the original members of the Lunar Society had gone before him. Day died in 1789, Wedgwood in 1795, Withering in 1799, and Darwin in 1802.

It is not necessary to trace the history of the Soho manufactory during the years of its successful management by Boulton and Watt and their successors. At first the engines were used chiefly for mining purposes. In 1785 an order came from the Robinsons of Papplewick for one to be employed in cotton-spinning. In 1787 one was introduced by the Peels into their establishment at Bury, and three others were applied to a similar use at Nottingham. In 1789 the first cotton-spinning engine at Manchester was set up by Peter Drinkwater, and thenceforward they were quickly brought into general use in the manufacturing districts.† During the eight-and-forty years prior to 1824 there were made at Soho two hundred and eighty-three engines for pumping and blowing, eight hundred and five rotative engines, and seventy-six boat engines—eleven hundred and sixty-four in all.‡

Of these works, down to the year 1800, Matthew Boulton was the chief director. He also found for himself plenty of other occupation. Part of this was in connection with the copying-press started by himself and James Keir. Great opposition was at first offered by the bankers and others, on

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may think there are no objects of any consequence besides those which immediately interest *them*. But objects far superior to any of which they have an idea engaged our attention, and the discussion of them was accompanied with a satisfaction to which they are strangers. Happy would it be for the world if their pursuits were as tranquil, and their projects as innocent and as friendly to the best interests of mankind as ours."—MUIRHEAD, *Life of Watt*, pp. 396, 397.

* SMILES, p. 466.

† MUIRHEAD, *Inventions of Watt*, vol. ii., pp. 370, 371.

‡ MUIRHEAD, *Life of Watt*, p. 423.

the supposition that it would give to the dishonest facilities for forgery, and otherwise interfere with the orthodox carrying on of business. In May, 1780, directly after taking out a patent, Boulton submitted the scheme to the members of Parliament and to the chief merchants of London. "On Tuesday," he said, in a letter to Watt, dated the 14th of May, "I was visited by several members of both Houses, who, in general, were well pleased with the invention; but all expressed their fears of forgery, which occasioned and obliged me to exercise my lungs very much. Many of the members tried to copy bank-notes, but in vain. I had quite a mob of members next day. Some of them mobbed me for introducing such wicked arts; however, upon the whole, I had a greater majority than Lord North hath had this year. On Thursday I had a tolerable good House, even a better than the Speaker, who was even obliged to send his proper officer to fetch away from me the members to vote, and sometimes to make a House. I spent Friday evening with Smeaton and other engineers at a coffee-house, when a gentleman, not knowing me, exclaimed against the copying-machine, and wished the inventor was hanged and the machines all burnt, which brought on a laugh, as I was known to most present." Before the year was out, however, a hundred and fifty machines, all that had been made as a first experiment, were disposed of, and many more were ordered.*

In this same year, 1780, Boulton was concerned in a movement very memorable in the history of Birmingham trade. It was the year in which, as we have already seen, the 'despotic sovereignty' of the rich old brass-founders reached its highest point. In August they clubbed together and proclaimed a rise of seven and a half per cent. in the price of all brass-foundry goods. That, of course, produced great dissatisfaction among all who used those goods in their various factories and trades. Boulton seems to have taken

* Smiles, pp. 266, 267.

the lead in the consequent opposition.* At any rate, he was the most influential founder and promoter of a New Brass and Spelter Company, which was established, on more liberal principles, in the spring of 1781. The principles, however, soon ceased to be liberal and, therefore, Boulton soon gave up his share in its management. The two hundred shares to which it was limited at starting were quickly taken up by a few energetic merchants of Birmingham, and in their hands it almost immediately began to emulate the 'brazen sovereignty' of the older manufacturers. "Congress-like," as Boulton said, "after obtaining power, they showed a disposition to exercise it to their own advantage only." That was wholly opposed to Boulton's plans in starting the project. "I thought it incompatible with the original motion," he said, "and I caused a general meeting to be held in order to rectify the complaint; but the decision of that meeting was against me." Therefore he retired from partnership in it.†

There was plenty of other occupation for his enterprising mind. During several years he was largely concerned in Cornish copper-mining, and in 1785 he was instrumental in forming a Copper Company.‡ It did not prosper, however, and he lost much money by the speculation. Unfortunate also to him was the Albion Mill, established at Southwark in 1786, in furtherance of a project which he had started three years earlier. The design was to make use of steam power in grinding corn, partly as a commercial speculation and a help to the public by cheapening the price of bread, but yet more as an exhibition of the steam-engine in the most perfect shape that it had then attained. "It consisted,' ac-

* It can hardly be doubted that Boulton was the author of *A Serious Address to the Merchants and Manufacturers of Hardware, and particularly the Inhabitants of Birmingham and the adjacent towns*, a very eloquent argument in favour of free-trade and commercial equality, which is quoted at length in *The Resources, Products, and Industrial History of Birmingham*, pp. 245–248.

† *Resources, &c. of Birmingham*, pp. 248–254. ‡ SMILES, p. 349.

cording to Watt's description, of two engines, each of fifty horse-power, and twenty pairs of millstones, of which twelve or more pairs, with the requisite machinery for dressing the flour and for other purposes, were generally kept at work. In place of wooden wheels, always subject to frequent derangement, wheels of cast iron, with the teeth truly formed and finished, and properly proportioned to the work, were here employed; and other machinery, which used to be made of wood, was made of cast iron in improved forms; and I believe the work executed here may be said to have formed the commencement of that system of mill-work which has proved so useful to this country. For a time, from the absence of the principal managers, the mill was very badly managed. It became a famous resort of idlers, who hindered the workmen, and of speculators, who discredited the enterprise by their rash projects. Boulton had to make a journey to London and set matters right. "The manufacturing of bubbles and new schemes," he wrote to Watt, "is removed from the mill to a private lodging." The engines were properly set to work, and they succeeded in grinding and dressing wheat at the rate of 16,000 bushels a week. Before the concern had been brought to pay its expenses, however, the mill was maliciously burnt down by some enemies of the project, on the 3rd of March, 1791, four months before the Birmingham riots. Thereby Boulton lost 6000*l.*, and Watt 3000*l.**

Boulton's share in the manufacture of steam-engines and his many other commercial enterprises in no way lessened his interest in his original establishment for the production of hardware and other miscellaneous articles at Soho. In Soho he started all sorts of new trades, and so led to their general adoption in Birmingham. By him, for instance, the manufacture of silver-plated goods was introduced, soon to become a staple of Birmingham commerce; although, up to the time

* Muirhead, *Life of Watt*, pp. 288, 289; Smiles, *Boulton and Watt*, pp. 353–359; Smiles, *Lives of the Engineers*, vol. ii., p. 137.

of his death, no rival could at all compete with him in excellence or honesty of workmanship.* For plated goods, indeed, as well as solid gold and silver wares, Soho was especially noted. "In the town and neighbourhood of Birmingham, within a few years past," said Boulton himself in 1773, "workers in gold and silver have become very numerous, together with carvers, charm-engravers, designers, enamellers, jewellers, and other artists in the precious metals, so that their productions have been sold advantageously both at home and abroad, and have become no contemptible article in the trade of this kingdom." †

That statement is from a petition addressed to the Houses of Parliament, in which Boulton represented the inconvenience which he and other manufacturers suffered through having to send all their goods for assay to one or other of the towns —London, Bristol, Exeter, Norwich, Chester, York, and Newcastle—appointed for the purpose. Chester, the nearest of them, was seventy miles distant from Birmingham. "Delays are occasioned which offend and disappoint our customers," urged Boulton; "our works, especially the richest and most delicate of them, are very often damaged and sometimes ruined by accidents in carriage and careless packing and repacking at the assayer's; a great price is paid for carriage, and our fresh designs, which have often cost us considerable sums of money, and always pains and time, are communicated to rivals before the inventors have reaped benefit from them." These and other arguments led to the establishment of an Assay Office at Birmingham, in 1773, with Boulton for its first director.

* *Resources of Birmingham*, p. 478.—"It is said that, in order to prove that the 'silver mountings,' of which all the ornamental parts of the articles were made, were indeed silver, Mr. Boulton used to send a small file with the goods to his customer, that he might test the quality of the metal used. So richly were the articles first made at Soho, that the daily use of forty years has scarcely made them 'bleed.'"

† *Petition relative to Assaying and Making Wrought Plate at Birmingham* in the British Museum.

From making gold and silver ornaments, Boulton passed to the coining of gold and silver money. The most important of all his projects, except the engine manufactory at Soho, was, perhaps, his establishment of the Soho Mint, leading to a general reformation of the coinage. It grew out of his honest indignation at the quantity of spurious coin manufactured by some of his disreputable neighbours. Bad management at the Mint, and the inventive spirit which suddenly burst into activity about a century ago, and which, while putting great numbers in the way of honest advancement, encouraged a few to enrich themselves in lawless ways, had made the coining of bad money a regular branch of trade, with Birmingham for its head-quarters. There were Brummagen guineas, shillings, and notes, as well as Brummagen goods of other sorts. Matthew Boulton, while reforming all other branches of trade in his native town, determined to reform this also. "I lately," he wrote to a friend in December, 1787, "received a letter from a Jew about making him a large quantity of base money; but I should be sorry ever to become so base as to execute such orders. On the contrary, I have taken some measures to put a stop to the execution of them by others; and if Mr. Butcher hath any plan of that sort he would do well to guard against me, as I certainly shall endeavour all in my power to prevent the counterfeiting of British or other money, that being the principle on which I am acting."*

As early as 1774, that is, from the time of his first settling in Birmingham, Watt says, in a manuscript memoir of his friend, that Boulton was in the habit of talking with him about the improvement of the coinage; but for some years he only talked. 'When the new coinage of gold took place,' as we are told by Watt, 'Mr. Boulton was employed to receive and collect the old coin, which served to revive his ideas on the subject of coinage, which he had long considered to be capable of great improvement. Among other things

* Smiles, *Boulton and Watt*, pp. 387, 388.

he conceived that the coin should all be struck in collars, to make it exactly round and of one size, which was by no means the case with the ordinary gold pieces; and that, if thus made, and of one thickness, the purity of the gold might be tested by passing it through a gauge or slit in a piece of steel, made exactly to fit a properly-made coin. He had accordingly a proof guinea made, with a raised border, and the letters *en creux*, somewhat similar to the penny pieces he afterwards coined for Government. This completely answered his intention, as any piece of baser metal which filled the gauge was found to be considerably lighter; or, if made to the proper weight, then it would not go through the gauge. Such money was also less liable to wear in the pocket than the common coin, where all the impression was prominent.'*

Boulton submitted his improvement to the Mint, and signified his readiness to contract for any work that might be given to him. Nothing was done by the Government for some time yet; but the East India Company employed him to coin some money for its use, and at a later date similar orders came in from the colonies. In 1786 he brought a skilful machinist from France, and with help from some of the best engineers in England—William Murdoch, Peter Ewart, John Southern, and John Lawson in especial—set up the Soho Mint.† "This Mint," according to his own description, given in 1792, "consists of eight large coining-machines, which are sufficiently strong to coin the largest money in current use, or even medals; and each machine is capable of being adjusted in a few minutes, so as to strike any number of pieces of money from fifty to one hundred and twenty per minute, in proportion to their diameter and degree of relief. Each machine requires the attendance of

* SMILES, p. 389.

† "God only knows the anxiety and unremitting perseverance of your father to accomplish this end," wrote Lawson, to Boulton's son, in 1810, "and we all aided and assisted to the best of our powers, without ever considering by whose contrivance anything was brought to bear."—SMILES, pp. 390, 391.

one boy of only twelve years of age, and he has no labour to perform. He can stop his press one instant and set it going again the next. As the blows given by this machinery are much more uniform than what are given by the strength of men's arms when applied to the working of the common press, the dies are not so liable to break, nor the spirit of the engraving to be so soon injured. It is capable of striking at the rate of 26,000 English crowns, or 50,000 of half their diameter, in one hour, and of working night and day, without fatigue to the boys, provided two sets of them work alternately for ten hours each." *

This Mint being set up, Boulton offered the Privy Council to coin all the money used in England, proposing to begin with copper, and to do that at "not exceeding half the expense which the copper coin hath always cost at his Majesty's Mint." † In 1797, after ten years' delays, his offer was accepted. For nine years he coined all the two-penny, penny, halfpenny, and farthing pieces issued in England—some four thousand two hundred tons in all—besides doing a great deal of work for foreign countries, and producing nearly all the tokens employed by private tradesmen. He also used his presses for striking off various medals, or, as he called it, "establishing elegant records of the medallic arts in the reign of George the Third." For this, Benjamin West, Flaxman, Nollekens, and other artists aided him with designs. A series of medals in commemoration of the French revolution was so famous that in one instalment twenty tons of them were sent to Paris. ‡ By these and others he made much money. Others, again, he struck to give away. One, the Trafalgar Medal, in honour of Nelson's victory, was issued by him in a very graceful way. An impression was given to every officer and man engaged in the famous battle, and then the dies were destroyed, in order that no more copies might be produced. §

* Smiles, pp. 396, 397.
† *Ibid.*, p. 392.
‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 394–396.
§ Muirhead, *Life of Watt*, p. 174.

But Boulton's services in this respect only began with the construction of the Soho Mint. When, in 1806, the new Mint on Tower Hill was set up, he was commissioned to build and fit it on the model of the Soho establishment. He also furnished Mints for Russia, Spain, Denmark, Mexico, Calcutta, and Bombay. 'Had Mr. Boulton done nothing more in the world than he has accomplished in improving the coinage,' said Watt, 'his name would deserve to be immortalized; and if it be considered that this was done in the midst of various other important avocations, and at enormous expense—for which at the time he could have no certainty of an adequate return—we shall be at a loss whether most to admire his ingenuity, his perseverance, or his munificence. He has conducted the whole more like a sovereign than a private manufacturer; and the love of fame has always been to him a greater stimulus than the love of gain.'*

While he was finishing his reformation of the coinage, Boulton was slowly dying of a painful malady. In 1800, on the completion of their bond of partnership and the cessation of their patent rights, he and Watt had left the management of the engine manufactory to their sons, Matthew Robinson Boulton and James Watt the younger. Watt went to spend nineteen years in happy retirement, in the society of the learned friends who crowded round him, and in pleasant continuance of the mechanical inventions and the philosophical studies that had engrossed him in earlier years. Boulton could not shake off his harness. He must 'either rub or rust,' he used to say. Giving special heed to the operations at the Soho Mint, he continued his oversight of the older works, every year increasing through the energy and wisdom with which he had organized them. "It is necessary for me," he wrote to Watt on the 10th of October, 1802, "to pass a great part of my time in or upon the bed; nevertheless, I go down to the Manufactory or the Mint once or twice a day, without injuring myself as heretofore, but not without some

* Smiles, pp. 398, 399.

fatigue."* Over and over again his friends begged him to abstain from work. "While you suffer yourself to be intruded upon in the manner you do," wrote Watt in 1804, "you can never enjoy that quiet which is now so necessary to your health and comfort;" and Watt's good old wife added a postscript, saying she could wish that it would rain every day in the year, if so Mr. Boulton might be hindered from walking to the works, and there wearying himself with employment that should be left to younger men.†

He could not work much longer. "If you wish to see me living," he wrote to his daughter in March, 1809—his wife was already dead—"pray come soon, for I am very ill."‡ In agonizing pain he lived for five months longer. He died on the 17th of August, 1809, eighty-one years of age. A notable gathering of friends, and of the sons and grandsons of friends who had gone before him, with four hundred of his oldest and most attached workmen, followed him to his place of burial in Handsworth churchyard.§

Boulton had outlived the jealousies of rivals and the fears of friends. "To his generous patronage, the active part he took in the management of the business, his judicious advice, and his assistance in contriving and arranging many of the applications of the steam-engine to various machines," wrote Watt, "the public are indebted for great part of the benefits they now derive from that machine. His active and sanguine disposition served to counterbalance the despondency and diffidence which were natural to him. Without him, or some similar partner—could such an one have been found—the invention could never have been carried by me to the length

* Smiles, p. 462. † *Ibid.*, pp. 474, 475. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 477.

§ The coffin, borne by hand for a distance of three-quarters of a mile, was attended by "forty-two gentlemen, heads of the manufactories, five hundred men employed in the manufactories at Soho, sixty women employed in the manufactories," and numerous private mourners. Eighteen singers, in cloaks, preceded, singing appropriate psalms the whole way. All the beadles of Birmingham were on horseback, and kept the way open.—*Documents relative to the Funeral of Matthew Boulton* (Birmingham, 1811).

that it has been. Mr. Boulton was not only an ingenious mechanic, well skilled in all the arts of the Birmingham manufacturers, but he possessed in a high degree the faculty of rendering any new adventure of his own or of others useful to the public by organizing and arranging the processes by which it could be carried on, as well as of promoting the sale by his own exertions and those of numerous friends and correspondents. His conception of the nature of any invention was quick, and he was not less quick in perceiving the uses to which it might be applied and the profits that might accrue from it. When he took any scheme in hand he was rapid in executing it, and on those occasions spared neither trouble nor expense. He was a liberal encourager of merit in others, and to him the country is indebted for various improvements which have been brought forward under his auspices." * According to the report of a younger friend, 'he was tall and of noble appearance. His temperament was sanguine, with that slight mixture of the phlegmatic which imparts calmness and dignity. His manners were eminently open and cordial. He took the lead in conversations, and, with a social heart, had a grandiose manner, like that arising from position, wealth, and habitual command. He went about among his people like a monarch bestowing largess.' †

He chose good workmen and made them his friends. The story of his first meeting with William Murdoch, a rough country lad, and his choice of him as an apprentice because of his self-made hat, has been often told.‡ Murdoch became a rich and famous engineer, and many others who came to Boulton as common labourers, left him—or oftener stayed with him—to become prosperous masters in their calling. He always made careful search for the best workmen, but,

* Smiles, pp. 485, 486.

† *Autobiography of* Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck (London, 1858), p. 40.

‡ Smiles, p. 255.

unlike some others of his time, to whom with reason he made indignant remonstrance, he would never engage any in dishonourable ways. "I have had many offers and opportunities of taking your people, whom I could, with convenience to myself, have employed," he wrote in 1769, to John Taylor, the great and not very generous manufacturer and banker of Birmingham, "but it is a practice I abhor." * From honourable motives he refused to follow the practice, then coming into fashion, of receiving gentlemen-apprentices. He thought it better to take all his pupils from the labouring classes, and so help those who had less chance of helping themselves. "I have built and furnished a house," he said to an applicant who came prepared to pay a premium of several hundred pounds, "for the reception of one kind of apprentices, fatherless children, parish apprentices, and hospital boys; and gentlemen's sons would probably find themselves out of place in such companionship." †

Of both boys and men in his establishment he took excellent care. He called Soho his school of industry; he also did his best to make it a school of economy. Every labourer was bound to contribute one-sixtieth of his weekly earnings to a Mutual Assurance Society in connection with the works; and thereby an ample fund was collected for the assistance of all its members during sickness and old age. In all other ways he watched over and aided his workpeople. Soho became the wonder of all visitors for the excellent order in which everything was arranged and the good effect thus produced upon the labourers. "Have pity on them, bear with them, give them another trial," he used to say to Watt, or any others who had less patience than himself. "True wisdom directs us, when we can, to turn evil into good. We must take men as we find them, and try to make the best of them." ‡

Boswell visited Soho in 1776, and observed a pleasant instance of Boulton's treatment of his men. 'One of them

* Smiles, p. 178 † *Ibid.* ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 480, 481.

came to him complaining grievously of his landlord for having distrained his goods. "Your landlord is in the right, Smith," said Boulton, "but I'll tell you what—find a friend who will lay down one half of your rent, and I'll lay down the other, and you shall have your goods again."'*

'I shall never forget Mr. Boulton's expression to me when surveying the works,' adds Boswell. '"I sell here, sir, what all the world desires to have—Power." I contemplated him as an iron chieftain, and he seemed to be a father of his tribe.'† The great works at Soho have been surpassed by other works both in and out of Birmingham; but the noble man who founded them must still be honoured as, more than any other, the father of modern manufacturing industry—first of the 'iron chieftains' whom his example has made numerous and powerful indeed.

* SMILES, p. 479. † *Ibid.*, p. 478.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COUTTSES OF EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

[1720-1822.]

Sir Francis Child, the first English banker, according to the strict meaning of the term, had many followers during the eighteenth century. Goldsmiths, like Child, gave up their trade in trinkets and devoted themselves wholly to trade in money, often before combined by them with their humbler craft; and merchants and dealers of all sorts soon found it to their advantage to devote themselves to the new and profitable business. In this way banks were established all over the country, the oldest after Child's being the Old Gloucester Bank, as it came to be known, founded in 1716 by James Wood, who, from keeping a mere chandler's shop, proceeded to deal in bills as well as soap and candles, and at length became the guardian of half the floating wealth of the western counties. His grandson, famous for his stingy habits, died in 1836, leaving a million of money to be quarrelled over by his relations, and wasted by them in law-suits.* In like manner the London banking house of Smith, Payne and Smith, owes its origin to the enterprise of a Nottingham draper, who, early in the eighteenth century, began to serve both his customers and himself, by holding for them their gains, to be prudently invested and returned to them with interest when they asked for it. The eldest Smith

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. vi. (New Series), p. 102.

thus became a banker in Nottingham; his son extended the business to Lincoln and Hull; and his grandson, taking a Mr. Payne as partner, transferred it to London.* No other country bankers, however, were so famous as the Couttses.

All through the seventeenth century the Couttses were important people in Montrose; but the world at large knew nothing of them until one of the family, Patrick by name, sought a wider field of enterprise than the quiet country town afforded. In 1694, the year in which his famous countryman, William Paterson, was founding the Bank of England, we find him described as 'a merchant of Montrose,' busy buying serges and worsted stuffs in Leeds, for shipment to Sweden. Next year, or the year after, he removed to Edinburgh, and there, up to the time of his death in 1704, he carried on his business, engaging in mercantile adventures to New York and Pennsylvania, Amsterdam, France, and the Canary Islands. He left about 2500*l.* to be divided between three children, of whom the eldest, John, was only five years old.†

John was educated among his kinsmen at Montrose, and there he seems to have stayed till he was twenty years of age. Then he returned to Edinburgh, to pass some time as apprentice to a merchant of the town; and in 1723 to start, with the little fortune left him by his father, in business on his own account. Therein he prospered, being ranked, in 1730, as first merchant councillor in the town council of Edinburgh. At one time he was in partnership with Thomas Haliburton, Sir Walter Scott's great-grandfather; then—from 1740 to 1744—he had a Robert Ramsay for his associate; and from near the latter year, his wife's cousin, Archibald Trotter, was his partner. 'Their business,' says

* Lawson, *History of Banking* (London, 1850), p. 264.

† *Memoirs of a Banking House*, by the late Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo, Bart., Author of the 'Life of Dr. Beattie,' edited by Mr. Robert Chambers (London, 1860), pp. 1, 2. To this interesting little work I am indebted for nearly all the information given above concerning the early Couttses and their Edinburgh business.

one who afterwards was a clerk, and ultimately senior partner in the house, 'was dealing in corn, buying and selling goods on commission, and the negotiation of bills of exchange on London, Holland, France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. The negotiation of bills of exchange formed at that period a considerable part of the business of Edinburgh; for there were then no country banks, and consequently the bills for the exports and imports of Perth, Dundee, Montrose, Aberdeen, and other trading towns in Scotland, with Holland, France, and other countries, were negotiated at Edinburgh.'*

In this sort of business John Coutts found plenty to do, and managed to make a large amount of money. Other money came to him about this time from one of his brothers, who, having prospered as a merchant in London, and dying early, left all his earnings, some 20,000*l.*, to the Edinburgh merchant and bill-broker, and thus much increased his influence. 'Being a man of high character as a merchant, as well as of very popular and agreeable manners, John Coutts lived with a degree of hospitality and expense not usual in the family of a merchant at that period.' Thereby he was well qualified to fill the office of Lord Provost of Edinburgh, to which he was elected in 1742. He was the first Lord Provost, we are told, who broke through the old custom of holding all civic entertainments at a tavern, when the expense was borne by the city, and, taking the provision and management of the hospitalities altogether into his own hands, conducted them in his own house. Therein, however, he did himself much harm. 'Unfortunately,' we read, 'he was thus led into excesses of the table, and other indulgences, which at length hurt his constitution.' In 1749 he was forced to seek change and better health by travelling in Italy. Failing in that, he died at Naples in the spring of 1750, 'beloved and regretted by all his acquaintance, who overlooked the imperfections of his character when they thought of him as the upright citizen

* *Memoirs of a Banking House*, p. 3, where is a portrait of John Coutts, from a painting by Ramsay.

and useful magistrate, ever zealous in the service of his friends, and a most agreeable member of society.'*

He left four boys, named Patrick, John, James, and Thomas, to share his business with their cousin Trotter. But the lads were too young and giddy, and Trotter was too sleepy and lazy, to carry it on with advantage. 'As neither his person nor manners were at all calculated to command their respect, his young friends were constantly teasing him with little boyish, roguish tricks. One consisted in their putting a live mouse under the cover of his inkstand, and watching with glee for the start he was to give, when, on his lifting the lid, the animal jumped out, to the no small amusement, as might be expected, of the whole counting-house.'†

Therefore, Trotter was got rid of. He went to make a paltry living for himself as agent, on behalf of the Edinburgh bankers, in carrying on a curious quarrel then raging between them and the moneyed men of Glasgow, his business being to collect notes and present them for payment at all sorts of inconvenient times, and in all sorts of vexatious ways.‡ A new partner was found for the young brothers Coutts in a John Stephen, their uncle and a wine merchant. This John Stephen's son was also introduced into the firm, and sent to aid in managing a branch establishment in London. With him went the eldest and the youngest of John Coutts's sons, Patrick and Thomas, their residence and place of business being in Jeffrey's Square, Saint Mary Axe, and their chief employment being the buying and selling of goods on commission. The two other sons, John and James, with the elder Stephen, remained in Edinburgh. 'They lived in the same house which their father had inhabited, being the

* *Memoirs of a Banking House*, p. 4. † *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 5.

‡ He certainly was often treated with inconvenience and vexation in return. Once he was all day long for thirty-four days obtaining payment for bills amounting in all to 283*l.*; one whole forenoon being passed in receiving 7*l.*, doled out in sixpences, one after another, as slowly as possible.—*Memoirs of a Banking House*, pp. 5, 6.

second floor of the President's Stairs in the Parliament Close; and they continued in the same line of business of banking and exchange which their father had carried on. Like him, too they dealt very largely in corn. They had a settled agent in Northumberland, residing at Fenwick, who was employed to make purchases of corn for the house, and for none else, in that country. Others at Aberdeen, at Portroy, and at Dundee, made purchases for the house in the fertile corn countries of Perth, Forfar, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Banff, and Moray; and two others, again, in Caithness and in Ross-shire, both of them gentlemen of landed property, but also men of business, though not, strictly speaking, merchants, made purchases for the house on their joint account in those northern counties. In England the house had large quantities of corn shipped for them at Yarne and at Stockton, in Yorkshire; at Lynn Regis, Fakenham, and Yarmouth, all in the rich county of Norfolk; at Haverfordwest, in South Wales; and by the noted Cooper Thornhill, who at that time kept the Bell Inn at Hilton, and was one of the most considerable corn-factors in England.'* They also procured corn from Belfast and Drogheda; and occasionally even imported wheat from Dantzic and Königsberg.

The Couttses were certainly the largest and the most adventurous corn-dealers in Scotland, perhaps in all Great Britain, a hundred years ago. 'When I reflect on the

* 'It was he,' says the same informant, 'who performed the extraordinary ride from Hilton to London, back to Hilton, and thence to London again, being 225 miles, in 12 hours 17 minutes. He set out at four o'clock in the morning of the 29th April, 1715, and came to the Queen's Arms, opposite Shoreditch Church, in 3 hours and 52 minutes; returned again to Hilton in 4 hours and 12 minutes, and came back to London in 4 hours and 13 minutes. He was allowed 15 hours for the task, and as many horses as he pleased, which he had ready waiting him at various places on the road. He was so little fatigued by this exploit that he rode next day as if nothing had happened. The road was lined with spectators to see him pass and repass, and many thousands, besides his own wager of 500 guineas, depended on the performance. Mr. Thornhill, though he kept an inn, was much respected for his gentlemanlike manners, and generally brought to table by his guests.'—*Memoirs of a Banking House*, pp. 6–8.

extent of all their correspondence,' says their sometime clerk, Sir William Forbes, 'and the combination of such a variety of intelligence respecting the prices of corn at all those different places, compared with the prices in the different parts of Scotland, I cannot but wonder at the boldness of enterprise which led them to embark in such a perilous traffic. Some years they made large profits, which they as often lost in others, owing to the fluctuation of markets, and the bankruptcy of many of those with whom they dealt. Indeed, I have often thought it not a little singular that a banking-house, which, of all branches of business, seems peculiarly to require caution, and which ought, as much as possible, to be kept clear of every undertaking of hazard or speculation, should have chosen to embark so largely in the corn-trade, which is perhaps the most liable to sudden fluctuation, and in which no human prudence or insurance can guard the adventurers from frequent loss.'*

Yet in combining banking transactions with general commerce, the Couttses only did as nearly all other bankers were accustomed to do in the middle of the eighteenth century. Neither in Edinburgh nor out of it were there many bankers in the strict sense of the term. At that time the leading men of business in Edinburgh, after the Couttses, were James Mansfield, a linen-draper, who, having made money in his trade, proceeded to make more by dealing in bills of exchange, and at length founded the famous banking-house of Mansfield and Company, afterwards Mansfield, Ramsay, and Company, and then Ramsay, Bonars, and Company; William Cuming, who in like manner combined banking with the cloth business that he had inherited from his father; and William Alexander and Sons, who began as tobacco merchants and ended as money-lenders of great repute.†

None of these, however, were, or ever became, as famous as the Couttses. Having in 1750 firmly established them-

* *Memoirs of a Banking House*, p. 8. † *Ibid.*, p. 9.

selves both in Edinburgh and in London, they proceeded to extend their engagements in both places, neglecting none of the general commerce, but especially aiming at increase of the banking business. In 1754 there were in Edinburgh only four clerks and two apprentices, besides the three partners, and in London the three other partners seem to have done nearly all the work by themselves. But in that year great changes began. In August, James, the third of the four, went on a visit to his brothers in London, where he fell in love with a Miss Polly Peagrim, whose uncle, George Campbell, originally a goldsmith in the Strand, had come to be an influential banker, patronized by all the Whigs, while his near neighbour and rival, Andrew Drummond, had the friendship of the Tories. Before the year was out, young Coutts was married to the niece, settled in London, and made a partner in the new firm of Campbell and Coutts. In 1760 his father-in-law died, and he then took his brother Thomas into partnership, the house being thenceforth known as that of James and Thomas Coutts.*

Patrick and John thus were left alone in possession of the original business, the one in London, the other in Edinburgh. 'Patrick was a man of elegant and agreeable manners, but more inclined to the study of books than to application to business.' He soon abandoned it altogether. Going on the Continent for pleasure and for health, he met with an accident prejudicial to both. At Lisle he was walking on the ramparts, jotting down some short-hand notes in his pocket-book, when a bystander came to the conclusion that he was a spy, and accordingly informed against him. He was thrown into prison, and there detained several months, before his friends could satisfy the authorities of his honesty, and procure his release. That trouble seems to have strengthened certain eccentricities in his character, and soon after his return to England, he had to be lodged in a London madhouse, there to remain through more than forty years.†

* *Memoirs of a Banking House*, pp. 12, 13. † *Ibid.*, p. 19.

John Coutts had died before that misfortune occurred. He appears to have been the best of all the four brothers. 'Lively and well-bred, and of very engaging manners,' says Sir William Forbes, 'he had the happy talent of uniting a love of society and public amusements with a strict attention to business. While resembling his father in his general manners more than did any of his brothers, he was more correct in his conduct; nor do I recollect to have ever seen him but once in the counting-house disguised with liquor, and incapable of transacting business.' We may infer that he was often so disguised when not in the counting-house; but no Scottsman pretending to be a gentleman and a pleasant member of good society could be expected to be otherwise at that period. Even in the strictest walks of business, room was found for merrymaking and good fellowship. 'In those days,' we are told, 'it was the custom for the merchants and bankers in Edinburgh to assemble regularly every day at one o'clock at the Cross, where they transacted business with each other, and talked over the news of the day; and as there were among the merchants at that time several gentlemen of a literary turn, and possessed of considerable powers of conversation, we were joined by many who had no concern in the mercantile world, such as physicians and lawyers, who frequented the Cross nearly with as much regularity as the others, for the sake of gossiping and amusement merely.' In that pleasant little business-world, not so oppressed with the burdens and cares of business as now-a-days, John Coutts was thoroughly at home. Unfortunately he died in 1761, before he was thirty years of age.*

Thus it happened that, before the end of 1761, there were no Couttses left in the old house of John Coutts and Company. The name, however, lasted for a long time; and the business—the banking business, at any rate—has lasted to this day. The two surviving and sane brothers, who had

* *Memoirs of a Banking House*, pp. 10, 11.

established themselves in the Strand, having still an interest in the firm as guardians of poor mad Patrick, promoted two of their old clerks, Sir William Forbes and James Hunter, afterwards Sir James Hunter Blair, to be partners in the business, with Robert Herries, a London merchant of influence, at the head of the firm. Herries cared more for merchandize than for banking. He conducted great speculations in all sorts of articles, and brought to the house much wealth, albeit at great risk, as agent of the Farmers-general of France for the purchase of tobacco in England, especially in Glasgow, then the head-quarters of this trade. He also conceived a bold plan for providing European travellers with circular letters of credit, and with that end set up an office in Saint James's Street, London, where is still conducted the bank that bears his name. But he was too speculative for his partners. Therefore they separated in 1775; and, from that time till his death in 1806, Sir William Forbes was the chief manager of the great Edinburgh bank of Forbes and Company, amalgamated with the Union Bank of Scotland in 1838.* He was not famous as a banker alone. 'Mr. Scott came to breakfast,' says Boswell, 'at which I introduced to Dr. Johnson and him my friend Sir William Forbes, a man of whom too much good cannot be said; who, with distinguished abilities and application in his profession of a banker, is at once a good companion and a good Christian, which, I think, is saying enough.'† Of him, too, the son of 'Mr. Scott' said, in *Marmion*,

> "Far may we search before we find
> A heart so manly and so kind!
> And not around his honoured urn
> Shall friends alone and kindred mourn;
> The thousand eyes his care had dried
> Pour at his name a bitter tide;
> And frequent falls the grateful dew
> For benefits the world ne'er knew."

In the meanwhile the house of James and Thomas Coutts

* *Memoirs of a Banking House*, pp. 15–91. † *Tour to the Hebrides.*

in London was steadily advancing in wealth and influence. From the first it chiefly aimed at extending the aristocratic connection started by George Campbell, leaving the city business in the hands of the banking-houses already established on the other side of Temple Bar. Of these the two most notable had been founded by the Hoares and the Barclays.

Henry Hoare, the son of a humble Buckinghamshire farmer, was a merchant in London about the middle of the seventeenth century.* His son Richard, born in 1648, was famous in his day for his good business qualities and his public services, for his wealth, and the good use to which he put it. 'He not only governed his private life by the strictest rules of virtue,' it was said of him, 'but also in many public stations did ever discharge his duty with the utmost integrity and fidelity.'† He was a president of Christ's Hospital, and one of its leading benefactors. He was Member of Parliament for the city of London from 1710 to 1713, and in the latter year, having been knighted, he served as Lord Mayor.‡ He was related, both in business and in some unexplained way of kinship, to a James Hore or Hoare, one of several goldsmiths who, according to a list drawn up in 1677, kept 'running cashes' for the benefit of their customers. For many years this James Hore issued bills or notes payable on presentation at his shop, known by its sign of a Golden Bottle, in Cheapside.§ He died in 1694; but some two years or more before his death the business was removed to Sir Richard Hoare's shop in Fleet Street, also indicated by a Golden Bottle, and, on Sir Richard's death, in 1718, it seems to have descended intact to his three sons. Of these sons, Richard, a merchant in Watling Street, died in 1720; John, a Turkey merchant, died in 1721; and Henry, who

* Sir Richard Colt Hoare, *Pedigrees and Memoirs of the Families of Hore and Hoare* (Bath, 1819), pp. 1, 2.

† Wilford, *Memorials and Characters* (London, 1741), p. 777.

‡ Hoare, pp. 3, 20, 21. § *Ibid.*, p. 19.

directed the goldsmith's and banker's business in Fleet Street, died in 1725.* The youngest son seems to have been the ablest and worthiest. 'His behaviour was such,' we are assured by one of his friends, 'under the various circumstances, capacities, and relations which he passed through, that a general esteem, love, and honour, were all along most justly paid to his character.' He left 2000*l.* to be given to various charity schools and workhouses, 2000*l.* to be spent in distributing Bibles, prayer-books and religious works, and other large sums to be applied in various benevolent ways.†

Henry Hoare had two sons. To the elder, Henry, born in 1705, descended the mercantile property in London, and various estates in Wiltshire and Dorset, of which Stourhead was the chief. The younger, Richard, was also partner in the business. He was Sheriff of London in 1745, and won for himself some honour by his skilful and honest performance of his duties during the rebellion of that year.‡ But he died at the age of forty-five; and his brother, surviving him by more than forty years, was the chief promoter of the fame and influence of the banking-house, which he directed during more than half a century. Having, as he afterwards declared, wasted his youthful years in the fashionable pursuits of his time—hunting, drinking, and gambling—he soon repented of his folly, and spent the remainder of his long life, covering eighty years, in diligent and honest money-making and enlightened studies out of business hours. Of his ample wealth he applied 190,000*l.* to the adornment of his house and grounds at Stourhead, and with other thousands he improved his other estates in Dorsetshire and Wiltshire. All these, with rare generosity, he gave, in 1783, as a wedding present to his grandson, Sir Richard Colt Hoare, the famous antiquary of Wiltshire; reserving to himself only the house on Clapham Common which he had built for

* Hoare, pp. 5, 2, 9. † Wilford, pp. 777, 778.
‡ Hoare, p. 11.

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convenience of access to his banking-house in Fleet Street. He died in 1785.*

Of mind as generous, though differently shaped, were his brother bankers, the Barclays. David Barclay, the commercial head of the house, was the son of Robert Barclay of Ury, author of the *Apology for the Quakers*. Soon after his father's death, in 1690, when he was only ten or eleven years old, David was apprenticed to James Taylor, a merchant of the Drapers' Company. In due time he married his master's only daughter, and succeeded to the business. He afterwards married Priscilla Freame, daughter of John Freame, a goldsmith who, like James Hore, kept 'running cashes' at his house in Lombard Street in 1677. By the two marriages he had, besides several daughters, four sons; James, who married a Sarah Freame, and became an influential member of the old banking-house of Freame, Barclay, and Freame; Alexander, who settled in Philadelphia; and David and John, who, for some time, at any rate, were chiefly employed in the mercantile establishment in Cheapside.† There old David Barclay lived and worked to the last. From some time previous to 1733, when he renewed his lease, at an annual rental of 140*l.*, he was in occupation of the old house, 108, Cheapside, exactly opposite to Bow Church, built by Sir Edward Waldo.‡ It was a house long noted as almost the best in the city for watching the procession of the Lord Mayor's Show. Thither, and for that purpose, the Duke of York had taken his daughters Mary and Anne, in 1677. There, many other royal visits having been paid to it in the intervening years, George the Third went with his family, in 1761, 'to see the city procession, in a balcony hung with crimson silk and damask.'§ Great were the preparations made for this visit by the homely Quaker and his house-

* Hoare, pp. 10, 11, 26–30.

† Morris Charles Jones, *Reminiscences connected with an Old Oak Panelling* (Welshpool, 1861), p. 39.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

§ *Annual Register* for 1761, p. 236.

hold;* and to the consequent favour of the King is, in part, attributed the rapid progress of the Barclays in money-making.

* In Mr. Jones's interesting pamphlet, drawn up in consequence of his having gained possession of the old panelling of Waldo's and Barclay's house, are printed two curious letters, of which some portions are here extracted. One of them was written by John Freame, David Barclay's brother-in-law, to his sister. He says that, "in the first place, brother Barclay spared no cost in repairing and decorating his house. When that was perfected, Lord Bruce came several times to give directions about the apartments and furniture (which was very grand), and also in what manner the family were to receive their royal guests. But previous to this, brother Barclay insisted that all his children that came there should be dressed like plain Friends. This injunction was an exercising time indeed to several of them. The sons were dressed in plain cloth, the daughters in plain silks, with dressed black hoods, and, my sister says, on the whole, made a genteel appearance, and acted their part in the masquerade very well. So that (as to the outward) the testimony of the Apology appeared to be maintained. And now, all things being in order, brother and sister Barclay, with David and Jack, were appointed to receive the royal family below stairs, and to wait on them to the apartment prepared for them above. Soon after which, the King asked for Mr. Barclay and his family, who were introduced to him by the lords-in-waiting, and kindly received; and brother, with all his sons, permitted to have the honour to kiss his hand without kneeling (an instance of such condescension as never was known before). The King after this saluted my sister and the girls, and the same favour was conferred on them by the Queen and others of the royal family." "The Queen, with others of the family, and several of the nobility, refreshed themselves with the repast provided for them in the back parlour and kitchen (which was elegantly set off for the occasion), and it being (I suppose) a great novelty to them, were highly delighted with the entertainment." "On the King's going away, he thanked brother Barclay for his entertainment, and politely excused (as he was pleased to say) the trouble they had given. This great condescension (I am told so affected the old gentleman, that he not only made a suitable return to the compliment, but (like the good patriarchs of old) prayed that God would please to bless him and all his family; which was received by him with great goodness."

The other letter, by one of Barclay's daughters, is more minute in its details. "I fully intended," she begins, "before I received your last packet, to make choice of the first opportunity to give you a sketch of the honours we received, and to inform you that the splendour, with every other circumstance relating to the important day, far exceeded the utmost stretch of our imagination, and has left so pleasing an impression that I am tempted to wish that Old Time would forget to erase it," . . . "Next the drawing-room door was placed ourselves, I mean my papa's children; for, to the great mortification of our visitors, none else were allowed to enter

That they did progress is certain. Old David Barclay died soon after this memorable visit of 1761. His eldest

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the drawing-room; for, as kissing the King's hand without kneeling was an honour never before conferred, his majesty chose to confine that mark of condescension to our own family, as a return for the trouble we had been at upon the occasion. After the royal pair had shown themselves to the populace for a few moments from the balcony, we were all introduced; and you may believe that at that juncture we felt no small palpitations. His Majesty met us at the door, which was a condescension we did not expect; at which place he saluted us with great politeness, and, advancing to the end of the room, we performed the ceremony of kissing the Queen's hand, at sight of whom we were all in raptures, not only from the brilliancy of her appearance, which was pleasing beyond description, but being throughout her whole person possessed of that inexpressible something that is beyond a set of features, and equally claims our attention. To be sure, she has not a fine face, but a most agreeable countenance; is vastly genteel, with an air, and, notwithstanding her being a little woman, is truly majestic, and I really think by her manner expressed that complacency of disposition which is perfectly amiable; and, though I never could perceive that she deviated from that dignity which belongs to a crowned head, yet, on the most trifling occasion, she displayed all that easy behaviour that elegant negligence can bestow." "Her hair, which is of a light colour, was in what is called coronation ringlets, with a circle of diamonds, so beautiful in themselves, and so prettily disposed as will admit of no description." "The lustre of her stomacher was inconceivable, being one of the presents she received while Princess of Mecklenburg, on which was represented, by the vast profusion of diamonds placed on it, the magnificence attending so great a prince, who, I must tell you, I think a fine personable man; and the singular marks of honour by him bestowed on us, declares his heart disposed to administer all the pleasure and satisfaction that royalty can give. Nothing could have added to the scene, but that of conversing with the Queen, who inquired if we could speak French, for that purpose, and so flattered our vanity as to tell the lady-in-waiting that the greatest mortification she had met with since her arrival in England, was her not being able to converse with us." "The same ceremony was performed of kissing the hand with the Princess Dowager, Amelia, Augusta, and the Dukes of Cumberland and York, and the other princes, who followed the King's example in complimenting each of us with a kiss, but not till their majesties had left the room; for you must know there were proper apartments provided, to give the rest of the royal family an opportunity of paying and receiving compliments; and then we were at liberty to go in and out as we pleased; but we could not bear the thought of absenting ourselves while we had one leg to stand on, and the feast supplied for our eyes supplied even other wants, or, at least, rendered us insensible of any. As both the doors were open the whole time, the people without had a very good opportunity of seeing; besides which the Queen was upstairs three times, and one of

son, James, did not long survive him; and thus David Barclay the younger became the chief manager both of the banking-house in Lombard Street and of the mercantile establishment in Cheapside. The details of the banking business, however, he seems to have left to others, especially to his younger brother John. He himself was pre-eminently a merchant, the most influential merchant of his time in London, perhaps, with the exception of William Beckford, the Earl of Chatham's great city friend and adviser on com-

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the opportunities was made use of for introducing my little darling, Lucy Barclay, with Patty Barclay, and Priscilla Bell, who were the only children admitted. At this sight I was so happy as to be present; you may be sure I was not a little anxious on account of my girl, who, very unexpectedly, remembered all instructions, and kissed the Queen's hand with such a grace that I thought the Princess Dowager would have smothered her with kisses; and on her return into the drawing-room such a report was made of her to his Majesty, that miss was sent for again. She was so lucky as to afford the King great amusement, in particular by telling him that she loved the King, though she must not love fine things, and that grandpapa would not allow her to make a courtesy." "Her sweet face made such an impression on the Duke of York, that I rejoiced she was only five instead of fifteen." "The King, you may observe, never sat down, nor did he taste anything the whole time. Her Majesty drank tea, which was brought her on a silver waiter by brother Jack, who delivered it to the lady-in-waiting, and she presented it kneeling, which, to us, who had never seen that ceremony performed before, appeared as pretty as any of the parade." "Through fatigue, mamma was soon obliged to retire, when sister Weston was declared mistress of the ceremonies, and sister Polly her attendant. As for us, we were so fortunate as to have nothing to do but converse with the ladies. Some of them were very sociable." "But what charmed me most of all was their Majesties being left with us by themselves, having sent away all before them, except the two ladies-in-waiting on the Queen; and, indeed, that has been deemed by the public the greatest mark of respect they could bestow, to trust themselves without so much as a guard in the house, or any of the nobles. The leave which they took of us was such as we might expect from our equals—full of apologies for the trouble they had given us, and returning thanks for the entertainment; which they were so careful to have fully explained, that the Queen came up as we were standing all on one side of the door, and had every word interpreted, and left us in astonishment at her condescension." "If, after the perusal of this, you should think of anything that wants confirmation or explanation, if you will send me word I shall answer in my next. I have several things to communicate, but this memorable day engrosses all my time and thoughts."

mercial and financial matters.* Like Beckford, he applied himself chiefly to American and West Indian commerce, then the most profitable branch of trade. He was greatly honoured, and apparently with good reason, in his day. 'Graced by nature with a most noble form,' we are assured by his earliest biographer, 'all the qualities of his mind and heart corresponded with the grandeur of his exterior. The superiority of his understanding confirmed the impression which the dignity of his demeanour made on all; and though, by the tenets of his religious faith, he abstained

* "This person," said LORD MACAULAY in his brilliant essay on *The Earl of Chatham*, "was a noisy, purse-proud, illiterate demagogue, whose Cockney English and scraps of mis-pronounced Latin were the jest of the newspapers." That illiberal description has been sufficiently refuted by Mr. CYRUS REDDING, in a recent book entitled *Past Celebrities whom I have Known* (London, 1866), vol. i., pp. 294–297. Beckford was a Tory, and, therefore, an offender in the eyes of the great Whig partizan; but he was a good man and an honest citizen; neither illiterate nor a Cockney. His great-grandfather, Colonel Peter Beckford, one of the first and most influential colonists of Jamaica in 1656, had been appointed President of the Island Council by Charles the Second, and William the Third had made him Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief. He died, very rich, in 1710. Further wealth was accumulated by his son and grandson, each named Peter, who, having made Jamaica their home, died, the one in 1735, the other in 1737. William, son of the third Peter, was sent to England when he was twelve years old, to be educated at Westminster School. There he learnt enough, at any rate, to find amusement in later years in translating several of the Latin classics. He greatly increased the great wealth that came to him by employing it in mercantile transactions. He was the foremost American and East Indian merchant of his time. He was Member of Parliament for the city during fourteen years, and twice Lord Mayor, serving his fellow-citizens so well that they set up a monument to his honour in Guildhall. "His civic entertainments," says Mr. Redding, "were the most magnificent ever given. On one occasion, at his private expense, he invited a number of the members of the Houses of Lords and Commons to a dinner, which cost him 10,000*l.* On that occasion, six dukes, two marquises, twenty-three earls, four viscounts, and fourteen barons of the Upper House of Parliament joined the members of the Lower, and went in procession to the city to honour him. There were six hundred dishes upon the tables." Dying in 1770, he left to his son, the eccentric William Beckford of Fonthill, the author of *Vathek*, property yielding 110,000*l.* a year, besides 1,000,000*l.* in ready money.—REDDING, vol. i., pp. 291–297; BRITTON, *Illustrations of Fonthill Abbey, with Notices of the Beckford Family* (London, 1823), pp. 62, 63.

from all the honours of public trust to which he was frequently invited, yet his influence was justly great on all the public questions of the day. His examination at the bar of the House of Commons, and his advice on the subject of the American dispute were so clear, so intelligent, and so wise, that, though not followed, Lord North publicly acknowledged he had derived more information from him than from all others on the east of Temple Bar.'*

David Barclay retired from the American trade at the time of its temporary restrictions during the Revolutionary War. He continued at the head of the Lombard Street bank, to which his cousin, Sylvanus Bevan, and his nephew by marriage, John Henry Tritton, were in due time admitted as partners. In 1781, moreover, in conjunction with a friend named Perkins, he expended 135,000*l.* in buying from Dr. Johnson, as executor for Henry Thrale, the immense brewery that the latter had established. His nephew Robert, son of the Alexander Barclay who had emigrated long before to Philadelphia, was brought to England to take part in the management of this concern.† In this, as in all the other affairs of David Barclay's life, says his old panegyrist, 'instead of making those he loved dependent on his future bounty, he became himself the executor to his own will, and, by the most magnificent aid to all his relatives, lived to see the maturity of all those establishments which now give such importance to his family. Nor was it merely to his relations that this reasonable friendship was given, but also to the young men whom he had bred in his mercantile house, and of whose virtuous dispositions he approved.' Barclay was a friend to all, a patron to all who were deserving. Great sums of money were applied by him to charitable purposes, and his charity was of no sectarian and narrow-minded sort. Philanthropic undertakings of all kinds had in him a princely supporter. Two of these may be instanced. In the one case, we are told, he founded near to his own house at Youngbury

* *Morning Chronicle*, June 5, 1809. † Jones, pp. 36, 38.

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a House of Industry, on which he spent 1500*l.* a year for several years, until the excellent system of management pointed out by him had succeeded in making it self-supporting. In the other he attempted a practical refutation of the assertion made by opponents of the anti-slavery movement, started in his lifetime, that 'the negroes were too ignorant and too barbarous for freedom.' Having an estate in Jamaica, he applied 10,000*l.* in emancipating all the slaves thereon, in sending out an agent to transport them to America, and in there instructing and establishing them in various trades and handicrafts. 'The members of this community,' it was said, 'prospered under the blessing of his care, and lived to show that the black skin enclosed hearts full of gratitude, and minds as capable of improvement as the proudest white.'*

In that temper David Barclay lived. In that temper he died, eighty years of age, on the 30th of May, 1809, leaving his vast wealth to his only daughter, married to Richard Gurney of Norwich, and mother of the Hudson Gurney who died on the 2nd of November, 1864, worth about 2,000,000*l.*

Barclay had many rivals in wealth, none more famous than Thomas Coutts, his junior by about two years. This Thomas Coutts, youngest of the four sons of old John Coutts of Edinburgh, had come to London, as we saw, to be junior partner in the mercantile establishment of Saint Mary Axe, in 1754, when he was about twenty-three years old; and he quitted that in 1760 to join his brother James in management of the banking-house established by George Campbell in the Strand. James Coutts, never a very happy or agreeable man, became more morose and unattractive as he grew older. His chief reason for taking his brother Thomas into partnership in 1760 appears to have been the need of some trustworthy assistant in managing the business. Soon after that he probably gave up nearly all active share in its direction. He entered Parliament as Member for Edinburgh;

* *Morning Chronicle*, June 5, 1809.

but he took no prominent part in its debates till near the year 1777, when symptoms of the family insanity that had already seized his eldest brother showed themselves in him. He made a speech in the House of Commons, so rambling and preposterous that his friends persuaded him to take no further share in the debates. Soon after that he went to Italy with his daughter, an only child, who there found a husband. At Turin he became raving mad; and, while on his way home for suitable treatment, he died at Gibraltar, early in 1778.*

Even Thomas showed occasional eccentricities during his long and busy life. In 1760, or shortly after, he married one of his brother's servants, the daughter of a small Lancashire farmer, Elizabeth Starkey by name; 'in whom, with a handsome countenance and great good-humour, were united many rustic virtues that are, unfortunately, not so common to domestic servants at the present day.' So says the biographer, writing in 1823. But even Betty Starkey could be saucy now and then. A few days before her marriage—a rainy, dirty day, we are told—she was at her work, when one of her master's clerks ran into the house, and was proceeding to hurry upstairs, there to get rid of his wet clothes. Betty stopped him, and bade him take off his shoes, so as to avoid dirtying the newly-washed stairs. But the young man, resenting what he thought an impertinence, only paused to stamp and scrape on each step as he ascended, in order that he might soil them all as much as he could. "Before long," Betty shouted after him, "I'll make you pull off your shoes, and your stockings too, whenever I choose it." The threat was never put in force. The young man, when he heard of the approaching marriage, thought he would surely be dismissed, or made to suffer in some way for his indiscretion. Instead of that, the young Mrs. Coutts showed herself

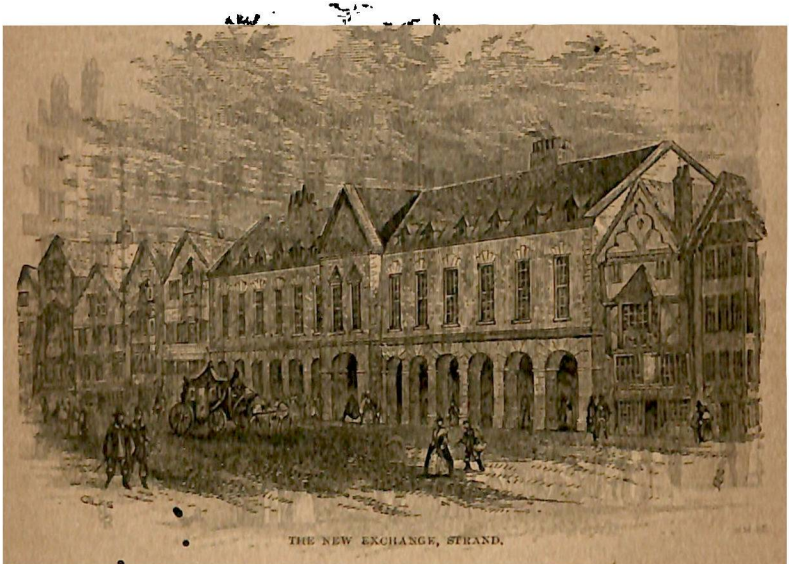
* *Memoirs of a Banking House*, p. 11; *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xliii., part i., p. 140; vol. xcii., part i., p. 196; *Annual Biography and Obituary*, vol. vi., p. 245.

especially friendly towards him.* 'In the earlier stage of her connection with her husband,' it is said, 'her mind was necessarily uncultivated, and her manners far from refined. Mr. Coutts, however, neglected not to take all due pains to qualify her for the station to which he had elevated her; and her quickness and capacity was such as amply rewarded him for his exertions. In a few short years she became, in manners and intelligence, as much a gentlewoman as some of those ladies who had been bred and brought up in the lap of luxury and splendour.'† And she certainly educated her three daughters so well that they were thought fit, with the help of the dowries their father was able to give them, to enter the most aristocratic circles. Sophia, the eldest, was married to Sir Francis Burdett, in 1793; Susan, the second, became Countess of Guildford in 1796; and Frances, the third, was made wife of the first Marquis of Bute in 1800.

Thomas Coutts, though laughed at and abused for marrying a housemaid, succeeded well in pushing the business, of which he soon became, and continued for nearly fifty years, entire master. Soon after his establishment as a banker, we are told, he began to have regular dinner-parties of bankers and moneyed men, intended to promote friendly feelings among all members of the class, and especially to increase his own influence. At one of these dinners, a city man, gossiping about his business, told how, on that same day, a nobleman had come to him, sought a loan of 30,000*l.*, and been refused, as he could give no sufficient security for the large debt. Before going to rest, Thomas Coutts sent a message to the nobleman referred to, asking the favour of his lordship's attendance at the counting-house in the Strand, on the following morning. The invitation was accepted, and the visitor, introducing himself to the banker, was astonished at his tendering him thirty 1000*l.* notes. "But what security am I to give you?" he asked. "I shall be satisfied," answered Coutts, "with your lordship's note of hand." Tha

* *Annual Biography*, vol. vi., pp. 246, 247. † *Ibid.*, p. 247.

was soon and thankfully given. "Now," said the nobleman, "I find that at present I shall only require 10,000*l.* Be good enough, therefore, to keep the remaining 20,000*l.*, and open an account with it in my name." To this proposal Coutts assented, and before long he was rewarded for his unusual exercise either of good-nature or of exceptional prudence, by a repayment of the loan, accompanied by a deposit of 200,000*l.*, the result of a sale of some family estates, made possible by that loan. Other members of the aristocracy, at the recommendation of Coutts's first friend, transferred their accounts to him; and from that time his house became the most fashionable of the West End banks.*



THE NEW EXCHANGE, STRAND.

George the Third banked with him until he found that Coutts had lent 100,000*l.* to his son-in-law, Sir Francis Burdett, in furtherance of his election as Member of Parliament for Middlesex. Thereupon he transferred his account

* LAWSON, *History of Banking.*

to one of the Tory establishments. With Burdett for his son-in-law, and Sir Thomas Cochrane, afterwards Lord Dundonald, for one of his oldest and stanchest friends, the Tory monarch might certainly regard him with some dislike.

In spite of his radicalism, however, Thomas Coutts prospered as a banker. Retaining the old house handed over to his brother by George Campbell, he soon filled it with business to overflowing. It was nearly in the centre of the space once covered by the New Exchange, the simple struc-

EXETER CHANGE, STRAND.

ture designed as a rival to Gresham's building, and serviceable as a resort for Dryden, Wycherley, Etheredge, and his friends in one generation, and Addison and his followers in another, before the place grew so disreputable that it had to

be pulled down in 1737. When the brothers Adam began to build the Adelphi in 1768, Coutts secured a piece of ground adjoining his house, and stipulated that the new street leading to the entrance a little to the west of Exeter Change,—started in a sort of rivalry to the New Exchange in 1670, and famous during the fifty years previous to his death, in 1817, as the haunt of William Clarke, a humble rival of Thomas Coutts,*—should be opposite his property. He proceeded to erect upon it a wing or continuation of his old premises, containing new offices and strong rooms. The strong rooms alone cost him 10,000*l.* Walls, floors, and roofs were made of solid blocks of stone six inches thick, and joined together with unheard-of precaution. The doors and panels were all of wrought-iron, and the closets contained safes within safes, all made as stoutly as possible. The first article deposited in any of these safes, it is recorded, was a precious diamond aigrette, which the Grand Turk had with his own hands transferred from his turban to Sir Horatio Nelson's hat.†

Coutts carried to extremes the strictness of detail proper in a banker. Every evening care was taken to balance the day's transactions; and on one occasion, when a deficit of 2*s.* 10*d.* was found on closing the books and comparing them with the state of the till, we are told that he kept in all his clerks the whole night through, bidding them find out the error somehow or other. Next morning, Mr. Antrobus, a junior partner in the firm, coming in, and hearing of the difficulty, explained that he had taken 2*s.* 10*d.* out of the

* In 1765, William Clarke borrowed 100*l.*, and with it furnished a stall in Exeter Change. By careful attention to business, and some closeness in his personal expenditure, he ended by establishing a trade in cutlery, turnery, and the like, which engrossed half the ground floor of the building, and yielded him more than 6,000*l.* a year. He was long styled the King of Exeter Change, and died, some eighty years of age, worth half a million of money. The site of the New Exchange is now covered by Nos. 54 to 64 of the Strand. Exeter Change extended from No. 352 to the site of Burleigh Street.

† *Annual Biography*, vol. vi., pp. 250, 251.

till, to pay for the postage of a foreign letter, but had forgotten to put it on record.*

This is another of the stories told about Thomas Coutts's management of his bank: 'It is the duty of the junior clerks in most banking-houses,' says the narrator, 'to do the out-door or bill-collecting business; but, if the day's transactions be heavy, some of the upper clerks take that duty. On the day that relates to this anecdote, the amount of the western walk exceeded 17,000*l.*; and a Mr. L—— was directed to take it. At the usual hour of the clerks' returning Mr. L—— was missing. The noting hour passed; messengers were sent to all the settling-houses, and to his private lodgings; but no tidings could be obtained. Advertisements were sent to all the newspapers; and next morning the town was placarded with a full description of person and property, and a large reward offered for securing the defaulter. Nothing was heard during the next day; but early the following morning one of the partners in the Southampton Bank arrived post, bringing with him the note-case and bag, containing the whole of the missing property, of which he gave the following account. "The landlord of the inn at which the coach arrives," he said, "had the day before, about three o'clock, called on him, and begged him to accompany him to his house, where a gentleman had arrived early in the morning, had gone to bed, apparently very ill, was, as he thought, now dying, and wished to make some communication relative to a large sum of money then in his possession. On his arrival, the person told him his name, said that he was a clerk in Mr. Coutts's house, and had been out collecting, and that on his return through Piccadilly he was seized with a stupor, a malady he for the last four months had been subject to, owing, as he supposed, to a contusion on the head he had received by a fall from a swing" (strange sport for a banker's senior clerk!) "in the gardens of the Mermaid at Hackney. He

*Annual Biography, vol. vi., pp. 250, 251.

added, he could give no other account how he came where he now was, which he did not know till the landlord informed him; for, on the moment he found the stupor coming on, to save the money, he got into a coach with the door standing open, which he supposed was a hackney one, but which proved to be the Southampton stage; and that he had remained insensible during the whole journey. He now begged, for God's sake, that an express might be immediately sent off to inform the house of the circumstance." The firm caused all the posted bills to be pasted over with bills acknowledging the recovery of the whole property, and stating that the delay had only been occasioned by sudden illness.' The banker seems to have had some slight suspicion, however, that his clerk had purposely gone down to Southampton, intending thence to make his way to the Continent; and that, finding the Guernsey boat gone, he had adopted this plan of hiding his evil purpose. But nothing could be proved against him. Therefore he was dismissed on the ground that a person subject to such fits could hold no place of trust in a banking-house; and a present was made to him, large enough to secure him a comfortable annuity.*

Thomas Coutts was a charitable man, though very strict in all business relationships, and, in old age, very miserly-looking in his own bearing and apparel. 'He was,' according to a not very friendly critic, 'a pallid, sickly, thin old gentleman, who wore a shabby coat and a brown scratch wig.' One day a good-natured person, fresh from the country, stopped him in the street, and offered him a guinea. Coutts thanked him, but declined the gift, saying that he was in no 'immediate want.'†

The banker was by no means stingy, however, in any case in which stinginess was really blame-worthy. His purse was always open for the relief of distress. He was also famous

* *Annual Biography*, vol. vi., pp. 251–253.

† *Memoirs of the Duchess of Saint Albans* (London, 1840), vol. i., p. 33[illegible] cited by Mr. THORNBURY, *Haunted London* (London, 1865), p. 478.

for the good dinners that he gave, and the crowd of wits that those dinners tempted into the circle of his acquaintance. He was especially fond of theatrical society. Playwrights and actors always found him a good patron; and, either in idle compliment, or because his opinions were worth heeding, often consulted him on even the intricate details of stage management and play-writing.

One of his theatrical friendships was particularly memorable in its consequences. Of Thomas Coutts's first wife, the exemplary servant whom he married somewhere near 1760, we hear nothing after 1785 or 1786, save that soon after that, symptoms of madness or imbecility — a kind of trouble that pressed with singular force and frequency on the banker's kindred and belongings — appeared in her conduct; and that, having long been dead to society, she actually died in 1815. Thomas Coutts was nearly seventy-five years old at that time. But within three months of his first wife's death, he married a second—the famous Harriet Mellon. With her, indeed, he had been very intimate for some years previously; thereby providing the world with plenty of topic for scandal. There seems to have been no real ground, though plenty of excuse, for this. 'Miss Mellon,' we are told by Leigh Hunt, 'was arch and agreeable on the stage. She had no genius; but then she had fine eyes and a good-humoured mouth.'* In 1795, while yet quite young, having herself and her mother to provide for, she made her first appearance at Drury Lane, as Lydia Languish. She caused much stir during the next twenty years, albeit Mrs. Siddons was then alive and giving expression to her wonderful talents on the same Old Drury boards. Her last appearance on the stage was as Audrey, near the beginning of 1815. At that time, because of the insults to which she was subjected, in consequence of his long-continued attentions to her, old Coutts persuaded her to abandon the theatre, and he gave her very liberal opportunities for so doing. For

* *Monthly Repository* for 1836, cited by Mr. THORNBURY, p. 92.

25,000*l.* he bought Holly Lodge, at the foot of Highgate Hill, from Sir W. Vane-Tempest; and, having stocked it with horses, carriages, and every sort of requisite furniture, placed it at her disposal. Before the year was out he married her; and she seems to have been a good wife to him during his few remaining years of life. She knew how to hold her own against the opposition of other people, shown in all sorts of curious and vulgar ways. Specially prominent in his opposition was her next-door neighbour at Highgate, 'a late member for Middlesex.' His carriage road passed directly in front of Mrs. Coutts's dining-room windows; and every time that she gave a dinner-party this road was suddenly filled with 'sheets, shirts, shifts, and pillow-cases, and all the appendages of a washing-day, hung out to dry, and in such abundant quantities as surprised the neighbours, and made some of them suppose the honourable member took in washing.' Thereto was added, of course, 'a clique of noisy household damsels and charwomen,' whose business it was to talk as loudly and as coarsely as they could; their work being best done when they oftenest and most effectively repeated the scandals spoken of the lady whom they were hired to insult. That was a persecution that no one could patiently submit to. Mrs. Coutts complained of it; but obtained no answer. She offered to buy up her enemy's house and carriage road for a very high sum; but still no notice was taken of her communications. Then she resorted to a fresh expedient. She had a high wall, more than a hundred feet long, built all along her grounds, and in front of her neighbour's property; and in that way entirely cut off from him all view of the Highgate Hills. That cost her 1000*l.*; but it effected its purpose. The stubborn Member of Parliament declared himself willing to sell the ground in question; the wall was pulled down again; and Holly Lodge, with extended surroundings, became a pleasanter spot than ever.*

Mrs. Coutts was not Mrs. Coutts very long. Her venera-

* *Annual Biography*, vol. vi., pp. 249, 250.

able husband died in February, 1822, at the age of ninety-one years. He left her in unrestrained possession of all his personal and landed property, stated to be under 600,000*l.* in value, in Middlesex—we know not how much out of Middlesex—besides a very large share in the immense annual profits of the banking-house. In due time Mrs. Coutts became Duchess of St. Albans; but she took care to secure her vast fortune in her own hands; and when she died she left it, in accordance, it was supposed, with her former husband's wishes, to his favourite grand-daughter. It was reckoned a few years ago that Miss Burdett Coutts's wealth, if told in sovereigns, would weigh thirteen tons, and fill a hundred and seven flour-sacks.*

* Thornbury, p. 478.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PEELS OF MANCHESTER.

[1723—1830.]

ABOUT the year 1600, a William Peele went, with his father, three brothers, and their families, from Craven in Yorkshire to the Lancashire town of Blackburn. Blackburn and its neighbourhood, a couple of centuries before, had been the property of some old De Peles, and from them, doubtless, William Peele was descended; but his offspring took no pains to trace out the pedigree, priding themselves, when they were most rich and influential, in the fact that the modern founder of their house was neither knight nor squire, but one of the sturdy class of English yeomen. He settled in a farmhouse, known, by reason of its low situation, as Hole or Hoyle, and there, early in the seventeenth century, was born a grandson, Robert Peele, who abandoned the farm to take a house in the centre of Blackburn, and begin business as a maker of woollen cloths.* Blackburn even then had some repute as a manufacturing town. Blackburn greys were coarse, unfinished woollen goods, generally sent to London to be worked up and prepared for sale. Robert Peele set himself to improve the workmanship of these goods, and the rough, home-made tools with which he in some sort anticipated the inventions of the next century were for a

* SIR LAWRENCE PEEL, *Sketch of the Life and Character of Sir Robert Peel* (London, 1860), pp. 6, 7, 9, 11.

long time preserved as curiosities in the family. He was an industrious, enterprising man, famous for his business-like charity and hospitable disposition. He was richer than most of the men around him. To each of several daughters he left a sum of nine score pounds; and his eldest son, Robert, who succeeded to his business, was rich enough to buy the little estate known as the Crosse—henceforth Peele's Fold—near Blackburn. This Robert's son William, however, had not health to carry him prosperously through life. Shutting himself up in the Fold, he became a farmer, like his great-grandfather and namesake, and was willing that his children should follow his example.*

His eldest son Robert,—the first who shortened the name from Peele to Peel,—was not so minded. Born at Peele's Fold in 1723, and fairly educated at Blackburn Grammar School, an old foundation of Queen Elizabeth's, he was at first a simple farmer. But with the farm he inherited the rough wooden blocks with which his grandfather and great-grandfather, sixty and a hundred years before, had stamped patterns on woollen cloths, and they set him thinking. He had a natural aptitude for mechanics and chemistry, and he used both in some inventions of which the secret was so well kept that we cannot tell what they were. In 1744, moreover, he married Elizabeth Haworth, whose brother, after an apprenticeship to some calico-printers in London, had lately returned to Blackburn, full of projects for the improvement of the work and its transference to Lancashire. The brothers-in-law clubbed together and began to make for themselves a business as calico-printers. But they had not funds enough for their enterprise: so they sought and obtained the co-operation of William Yates, who had made or inherited a little fortune as keeper of the Black Bull Inn, in Blackburn. Hence the firm of Haworth, Peel, and Yates,

* Sir Lawrence Peel, pp. 11, 12, 14, 16. There was an old saying among the Peels, says Sir Lawrence, that in their family two generations of working bees alternated with one of drones.

established soon after the year 1750, with a factory at Blackburn and a warehouse in Manchester.*

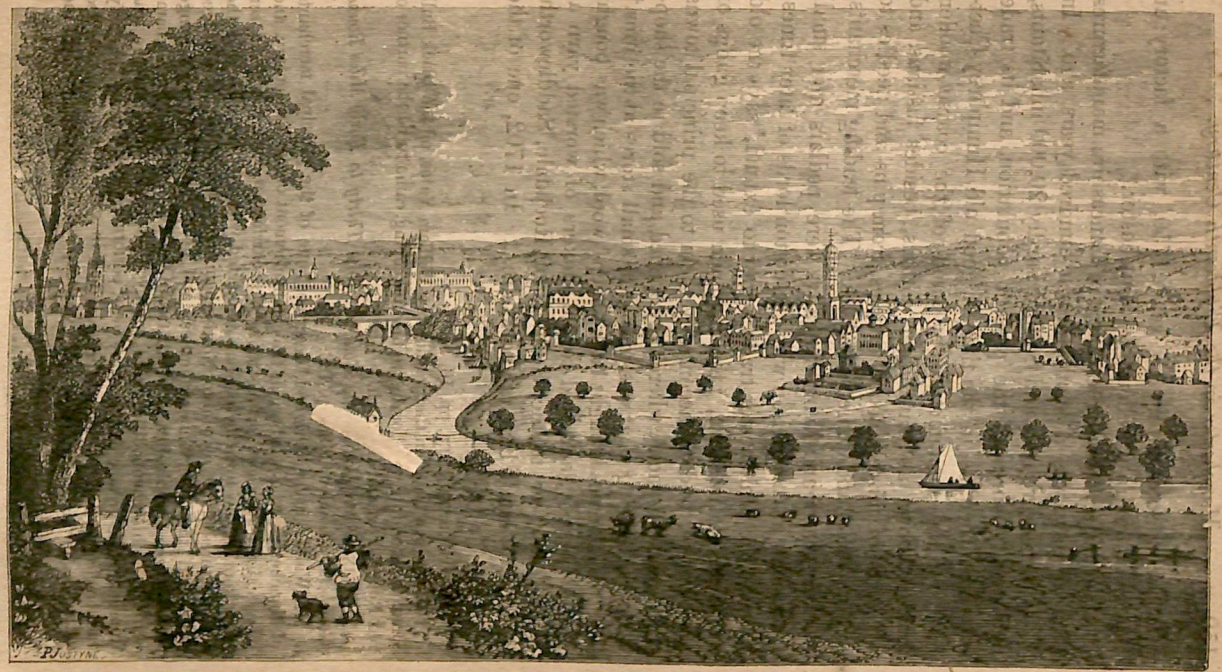
Manchester, though the centre of Lancashire manufactures then as now, was a small town a hundred years ago. In 1757 there were in it and Salford hardly 20,000 inhabitants, one twenty-fourth of the present population, and its trade consisted then, as in the time of good old Humphrey Chetham, in the manufacture by hand of the coarse woollen articles known as Manchester cottons, besides fustians and all sorts of miscellaneous articles, from pins and needles to millers' sacks and women's bodices. The leading merchants, working hard and living frugally, were pedlars and small tradesmen in comparison with the cotton lords of later times. 'When the Manchester trade began to extend,' says the old historian of the town, 'the chapmen used to keep gangs of pack-horses, and to accompany them to the principal towns with goods in packs, where they opened and sold to the shopkeepers, lodging what was unsold in small stores at the inns.† The pack-horses brought back sheeps' wool, which was bought on the journey, and sold to the makers of worsted yarn at Manchester, or to the clothiers of Rochdale, Saddleworth, and the West Riding of Yorkshire.'‡ In 1702, one of the

* Sir Lawrence Peel, pp. 16, 17.

† There is a tradition that in this way William Yates, of the Black Bull, Blackburn, adding warehousing to his innkeeping, came to be the partner of old Robert Peel and Haworth.

‡ Aikin, *Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester* (London, 1795), p. 183.

Mr. Walker, in his 'Original,' describes 'one of the principal merchants of Manchester, who was born at the commencement of the last century, and who realized sufficient fortune to keep a carriage when not half a dozen were kept in the town by persons connected with business. He sent the manufactures of the place into Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, and the intervening counties, and principally took in exchange feathers from Lincolnshire and malt from Cambridgeshire and Nottinghamshire. All his commodities were conveyed on pack-horses, and he was from home the greater part of every year, performing his journeys leisurely on horseback. His balances were received in guineas, and were carried with him in his saddle-bags. He was exposed to the vicissitudes of the



MANCHESTER IN 1728.

Vol. II., page 150.

greatest merchants of Manchester paid 40*l.* for the year's rental of his house and warehouse.* 'An eminent manufacturer of that age,' we are told, 'used to be in his warehouse before six in the morning, accompanied by his children and apprentices. At seven they all came in to breakfast, which consisted of one large dish of water-pottage, made of oatmeal, water, and a little salt, boiled thick and poured into a dish. At the side was a pan or basin of milk, and the master and apprentices, each with a wooden spoon in his hand, without loss of time, dipped into the same dish, and thence into the milkpan; and as soon as it was finished they all returned to their work.'† As the manufacturers grew rich, and apprentices came to them from a higher grade of society, business began to be carried on in a more luxurious way. In the year 1760 the master used to allow a back parlour to his apprentices, and give them tea twice a day. About this time, too, the pack-horse mode of trade began to decline. The manufacturer stayed at home, and appointed agents in the different towns, or sent messengers from place

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weather, to great labour and fatigue, and to constant danger. In Lincolnshire he travelled chiefly along bridle-ways, through fields where frequent gibbets warned him of his peril, and where flocks of wild-fowl continually darkened the air. Business carried on in this manner required a combination of personal attention, courage, and physical strength, not to be hoped for in a deputy; and a merchant then led a much more severe and irksome life than a bagman afterwards, and still more than a commercial traveller of the present day.'

* In the same year his contribution to the "wages" of the dissenting minister whom he attended, was 10*s.* For a periwig he paid 2*l.* 10*s.* His little girl, five years old, being ill, he, and some others of his family, took her to Scarborough, at a cost of 26*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.*, besides coach hire, amounting to 13*l.* 6*s.* 2*d.* The child died, and 45*s.* were spent on gloves to be worn at her funeral.—AIKIN, pp. 185, 186.

† AIKIN. As another illustration of old Manchester customs, Dr. Aikin tells of a Madam D——, who owned one of the three or four carriages to be found there in 1720. She did not like tea or coffee, and whenever she paid an afternoon visit to her aristocratic friends, she would—while they were partaking of the new-fangled beverages—sit by the fire, enjoying her tankard of ale and pipe of tobacco.

to place with samples of his goods, leaving the goods themselves to be sent when they were ordered.*

Cotton manufacture, soon to become the staple of Manchester commerce, began in the smaller towns of the neighbourhood. First introduced in 1676 by the Protestants who had been driven to England by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, it was, indeed, for a long time confined to London and other towns on the Thames.† For a century every sort of opposition was raised to its development by the manufacturers of woollen and silken goods, who imagined that the new commodities would ruin their own trades. They encouraged riots in the streets of London and in country towns, and they procured the passing of arbitrary laws in Parliament. In 1712, an excise duty of threepence was set on every square yard of calico made in England; in 1714, the duty was raised to sixpence; and in 1721 cotton goods were absolutely forbidden, a penalty of 5*l.* being appointed to every wearer of them, while every seller was made liable, for each offence, to a fine of 20*l.*‡ None of these laws were effectual, and gradually a better feeling spread through the country. In 1736 the manufacture of calicoes was permitted, with a cotton woof, provided the warp was linen, and in 1774 the manufacture and sale of every kind of 'painted, stained, and dyed stuffs, made wholly of cotton,' were made lawful. Many years before that they had come to be freely practised both in London and in the north, the first calico manufacturers of Lancashire being Robert Peel and his brother-in-law.

The details of their work would be worth knowing, could we only get at them. But, according to the fashion of those times, none knew them, even in their own day. Peel and Haworth kept their secrets as nearly as possible to themselves, intrusting them only to a few tried agents, bound to secrecy

* Aikin, pp. 183, 184.

† Anderson, *Origin of Commerce* (London, 1801), vol. ii., p. 535.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 127, 128.

by oath. The trustiest of all was a skilled mechanic closeted in Haworth's private house, who carried on both his experiments and his finishing processes unknown to any one else.*

In Peel's private house experiments, though of a homelier sort, were also carried on. On one occasion, we are told, the manufacturer himself was working in his kitchen, designing patterns and planning how best to print them off, when his little daughter Anne ran off to the herb garden

OLD ROBERT PEEL'S HOUSE IN FISH LANE, BLACKBURN.

and brought back a sprig of parsley. With a child's eloquence she pointed out its beauty and begged him to use it as a pattern. The hint was promptly acted upon. A pewter dinner-plate was at once taken down from the dresser, and father and daughter between them roughly sketched a figure of the leaf, which served for a first experiment. It was soon copied and improved upon. Nancy's pattern, as it was known in the family, became a favourite among calico-buyers, and because of it the father obtained the nickname, throughout Lancashire, of Parsley Peel.†

* Sir Lawrence Peel, p. 18. † *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20.

From those humble beginnings an active and profitable business was soon developed. Living generally at a house which he had bought in Fish Lane, Blackburn, and having his chief factory at Brookside, a village two miles off, Parsley Peel worked on for twenty years or more. His partners, Haworth and Yates, as it seems, soon left him to found a separate and larger manufactory at Bury, halfway between Blackburn and Manchester; but there was always close friendship, as well as some sort of business connection, between the houses. In 1779 he also had to leave Blackburn. In that year the long-growing dissatisfaction of the handloom weavers, especially provoked by Hargreaves' invention of the spinning-jenny, broke out in open rioting. Nearly all the machinery in Blackburn was destroyed, and among the rest Peel's works at Brookside.*

Thereupon he travelled south. With part of his old savings he built three large mills at Burton-upon-Trent, two on the river's side and one a little distance off. The canal supplying it with water cost him 9,000*l*. Here, as at Blackburn, we are told by one of his grandsons, 'all the works which he erected or caused to be made were of a solid and enduring kind. He understood thoroughly every branch of the cotton trade. He instructed his sons himself. He loved to impress on their minds the great national importance of this rising manufacture. He was a reflecting man, who looked ahead; a plainspoken, simple-minded man, not illiterate, nor vulgar, either in language, manners, or mind, but possessing no refinement in his tastes, free from affectation, and with no desire to imitate the manners or mode of life of a class above his own. His sons resembled him, and a strong likeness pervaded the whole family. They were, without one exception, hardworking, industrious, plain, frugal, unostentatious men of business, reserved and shy, nourishing a sort of defensive pride and hating all parade, shrinking

* Sir Lawrence Peel, p. 17.

perhaps too much from public service and public notice, and it may be too much devoted to the joys of a private station.'* 'My father,' said the most enterprising and successful of these sons, 'moved in a confined sphere. He possessed in an eminent degree a mechanical genius and a good heart. He had many sons, and placed them all in situations that might be useful to each other. The cotton trade was preferred as best calculated to secure this object; and by habits of industry, and imparting to his offspring an intimate knowledge of the various branches of the cotton manufacture, he lived to see his children connected together in business, and, by their successful exertions, become, without one exception, opulent and happy. My father may be truly said to have been the founder of our family; but he so accurately appreciated the importance of commercial wealth, in a national point of view, that he was often heard to say that the gains of the individual were small, compared with the national gains arising from trade.'†

Everything we know about the good old man goes to prove the accuracy of that pleasant sketch. He was a shy and absent man; always looking down as he walked, and therefore known as 'the philosopher' by the Burton people among whom he lived for some ten years. 'He wore a burly Johnsonian wig. Like Johnson, he was dressed in dark clothes of ample cut. He leaned, as he walked, upon a tall gold-headed cane, and as he was a very handsome man, he looked a figure stately enough for a mediæval burgomaster.' It was his maxim, through life, that 'a man, barring accidents, might be whatever he chose.'‡

* Sir Lawrence Peel, pp. 20, 21.

† Corry, *History of Lancashire* (London, 1825), vol. ii., p. 657.

‡ Sir Lawrence Peel, pp. 17, 18, 24. To the many passages cited above from Sir Lawrence Peel's delightful volume, almost the only authentic source of information about the first Robert Peel, the following should be added: "It chanced one day"—he being at Burton—"that the Earl of Uxbridge, from whom he rented his mills, called upon him on some business, on the conclusion of which his lordship was invited by Mr. Peel

Robert Peel, the elder, was fifty-six when he settled in Burton. After a residence there of some ten or twelve years he seems to have left the thriving business in the hands of his sons, and to have gone to end his days in Manchester, with or near his only daughter, the Nancy of the parsley pattern, now a clergyman's wife. There he died in September, 1795, at the age of seventy-two. His wife lived six months longer. 'She had wished to survive him,' we are told. 'One evening near the close of their lives, as they were seated by their fireside, surrounded by some of their descendants, conversing with the calmness of age upon death, the old lady said to her husband, "Robert, I hope I may live a few months after thee." "Why?" asked her husband. "Robert," she replied, "thou hast always been a good kind husband to me: thou hast been a man well thought of, and I should like to stay by thee to the last and keep thee all right."' The loving wife had her wish. She died in March, 1796, and was buried by her husband's side in Saint John's Church, Manchester.*

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to his house, an invitation which was courteously accepted. They walked together to the house, which was at no great distance. As they approached it, Mr. Peel saw that the front door was closed, and being always impatient of form, and also a valuer of time, he led his honoured guest into the house by the back way on a washing day, and whilst piloting him through a north-west passage, not without its obstructions of tubs, pails, and other household utensils, was observed by the reproachful eyes of his wife, who failed not, with a due observance, however, of time and place, to make continual claim in the name of decorum against an entry scarcely less lawless in her eyes than a dissesin. This dame," adds Sir Lawrence, "was quite able to guide the helm herself." On one occasion, "there was a panic—some great house had fallen. Mr. Peel was from home when the news arrived, which came on a Saturday night. The Peels were at this time connected with a bank on which a run was apprehended. The next morning Mrs. Peel came downstairs to breakfast dressed in her very best suit, and seeing her daughter less handsomely attired than she in her politic brain deemed expedient, she desired her to go upstairs and put on her very best clothes. 'Look as blithe as you can,' said she, 'for, depend upon it, if the folks see us looking glum to-day, they will all be at the bank to-morrow.'"—pp. 25, 26.

* Sir Lawrence Peel, p. 28.

THE FIRST SIR ROBERT PEEL.

Vol. II., page 157.

Six sons, all cotton-spinners and calico-printers, survived them. Of these Robert, the third, was the cleverest and the best man of business. He was born at the Fish Lane house in Blackburn in 1750, and there he lived for nearly twenty years. When a lad of fourteen, it has been said, he avowed his intention of extending the fame of his family far beyond the limits set by his unambitious father;* and at the age of eighteen, telling his father that in Blackburn they were too thick upon the ground, he begged for a sum of 500*l.* with which to go out and build his own fortune in the world.† That request was not acceded to. But soon afterwards, in 1769 or 1770, a place was found for the young man in the establishment of Haworth and Yates in Bury,‡ now almost a part of Manchester, but then a separate village, nine miles off, with about two thousand inhabitants.§

In Bury young Robert Peel lodged with his partner, Mr. Yates, paying for his board, it was said, eight shillings a week. There is a tradition, not very credible, that Yates, finding the eight shillings inadequate payment for the trouble and expense he was put to, soon demanded another shilling, and that thereupon so serious a quarrel arose that the whole connection was likely to be broken off, until at last a compromise was made and eight and sixpence a week was agreed upon. Be that as it may, Robert Peel passed many years in William Yates's house and found it a pleasant home. Its youngest inmate was Yates's daughter Ellen, a merry pretty little girl. She was young Peel's plaything and playfellow when he went home after a hard day's work, and often, we are told, he would take her on his knee and play at love-making. "Nelly, thou bonny little dear," he used to say, "wilta be my wife?" "Yes," was her constant answer. "Then I'll wait for thee, Nelly," he replied as constantly; "I'll wed thee and none else." He kept his word. Pretty

* W. Cooke Taylor, *Life and Times of Sir Robert Peel* (London, no date, vol. i., p. 6.

† Sir Lawrence Peel, p. 32. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 33. § Aikin, p. 266.

Nelly went to school, and in due time came back as handsome a young woman as was to be found in England. She was somewhat too gay for the hardworking cotton-spinner, but she was willing to do her best towards making herself a good wife for him, and she succeeded altogether. They were married in 1786, when she was eighteen, he six-and thirty; and for seventeen years she was his best friend and helper. She wrote his letters, criticised his plans; and, what perhaps was most serviceable of all, entertained his friends for him. She died in 1803, partly, it was thought, through the excessive toil involved in the gaieties of the London season, much welcomer to her, even though they were killing her, than to her busy husband. "Ah, if Robert hadn't made our Nelly a lady," old Yates used to say, "she might ha' been living yet!" *

Long before that, at least a dozen years before his marriage even, Robert had become a partner in the Bury house of business. About that time his uncle Haworth retired, and Yates, though senior partner, was glad to leave the chief management in the hands of the younger and more active man. "The will of our Robert is law here," he used to say when any complaint was made against the strict rule or the frequent innovations adopted by his partner. Young Peel was fond of hard work, and he expected all under him to be good workmen. Living near to the works, he used, whenever there was threatening of bad weather, to get up in the middle of the night and make personal inspection of the bleaching-grounds, to see that everything was as well as possible protected from harm. And regularly once a week he sat up all night with his pattern drawer, in order, without an hour's delay, to examine the patterns brought by the London coach, which arrived soon after midnight. For many years after his first settlement in Bury, the London calico-printers were thought superior to all others, and the

* Smiles, *Self-Help* (London, 1860), p. 38; Sir Lawrence Peel, pp. 35, 36.

greatest house in Lancashire was content to follow their lead. As soon as he could Robert Peel reversed this state of things, and before the close of the eighteenth century all the printing done in London was less in quantity than that produced under his sole supervision in the works at Bury.* 'The principal of these works,' said Dr. Aikin in 1795, 'are situated on the side of the Irwell, from which they have large reservoirs of water. The articles here made and printed are chiefly the finest kinds of the cotton manufacture, and they are in high request both at Manchester and London. The printing is performed both by wooden blocks and by copper rollers, and the execution and colours are some of the very best of the Lancashire fabric. The premises occupy a large portion of ground, and cottages have been built for the accommodation of the workmen, which form streets and give the appearance of a village. Ingenious artists are employed in drawing patterns and cutting and engraving them on wood and copper, and many women and children in mixing and penciling the colours, and so forth. The company has several other extensive works in the neighbourhood, as well on the Irwell as on the Rock. Some of them are confined to the carding, slubbing, and spinning of cotton; others to washing the cottons with water-wheels which go round with great velocity, but can be stopped in an instant for taking out and putting in the goods. Boiling and bleaching the goods are performed at other works. In short, the extensiveness of the whole concern is such as to find constant employment for most of the inhabitants of Bury and its neighbourhood, of both sexes and all ages, and, notwithstanding their great number, they have never wanted work in the most unfavourable times. The peculiar healthiness of the people may be imputed partly to the judicious

* Sir Lawrence Peel, pp. 33, 34; *The Peel Family—its Rise and Fortunes*, a series of very interesting papers compiled from traditions in the memory of various people of Bury, and published in the *Manchester Examiner and Times* for October and November, 1850.

and humane regulations put in force by Mr. Peel.'* He was exceedingly attentive to the personal comfort of his workmen, and to the education and healthy bringing up of their children. Other children were brought in great numbers from the London workhouses to be carefully prepared for factory work, in two large schools, directed by competent mistresses. In like manner, older labourers were brought from various parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire to stock the immense establishments known as Radcliffe Mill and Makin Mill, the Hinds and the Burrs, White Ash, and Summerseat.† The whole town of Bury became a sort of appendage to Peel's factories, and, in consequence of his wonderful prosperity, its population steadily advanced, from being about 2,000 in 1773, to upwards of 15,000 in 1831.‡ He also erected other works in other parts of England, the most important being those at Tamworth. Altogether, it was said in 1803, he had 15,000 persons in his employ, and in a single year he paid more than 40,000*l.* to the Excise Office by way of duty on his printed goods.§ Of one pattern alone he sold upwards of twenty thousand pieces every year for several years, the profit on each piece being reckoned at a guinea. ‖

In these patterns, though coarse enough according to modern judgments, were displayed the best manufacturing art of the times. They generally consisted of circles, diamonds, dice, and clubs, and various sorts of leaves and flowers, daisies and buttercups being the most common. One favourite pattern for bed-furniture was adorned with pictures of sun-flowers, each measuring five inches across. The patterns were only printed in a single colour or outline shade. They were finished afterwards by female pencillers who, in Peel's establishments, filled two long rows of workshops. They put in the colours necessary to the completion of the

* Aikin, pp. 268, 269. † *The Peel Family.* ‡ Aikin, p. 266.
§ *Public Characters of* 1803-4. London, 1804), pp. 31, 33.
‖ *The Peel Family.*

device by hand, often going over the piece of calico eight or nine times. This made the material expensive. Calico was sold, eighty years ago, for 4*l.* or 5*l.* a piece; that is, about 3*s.* or 3*s.* 6*d.* a yard. Even in 1810 a good print was worth 2*s.* 6*d.* a yard. The women employed as pencilers easily earned 2*l.* a week, and those were the wages of a good engraver.*

In his cotton mills Peel took full advantage of Samuel Crompton's famous invention of the mule, in 1779. He would gladly have secured for Crompton himself much greater advantage than his pride permitted. Soon after the promulgation of the invention Peel went over to Blackburn, there to inspect the instrument, taking with him several skilled mechanics to examine and learn how to copy it. Crompton was willing enough that this should be done; but it seems that Peel grievously, though innocently, offended him by offering him sixpence for each of the labourers who had been allowed to examine the mule.† The fact of his poverty made the proposal appear insulting to him. Of this, however, Peel was ignorant. Twice, in later years, he visited the inventor; in the first instance, to offer him a lucrative situation in his factory; in the second, to propose to him a partnership that would have certainly enriched him, besides hastening the general introduction of the mule into cotton manufacture. This would have been a union of business-like qualities and inventive energy, as notable and as benefical both to the world and to the men themselves as the partnership of Boulton and Watt in the manufacture of steam-engines at Birmingham. But Crompton would have nothing to do with Peel. His old grudge hindered him from being even grateful for the kindness shown to him, either now or at later times, by the great cotton-spinner and cotton-printer.‡

* *The Peel Family.*

† French, *Life and Times of Samuel Crompton* (Manchester, 1860), p. 81.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 79–81.

Sir Robert Peel, therefore, grew rich without him. He well deserved to prosper. 'He was an ambitious man,' it has been said by his nephew; 'he loved money; but he loved it principally as an instrument of power. He was the very reverse of a selfish man. He possessed a genial, generous nature; he loved young people, and loved to see all around him happy. He was eager to diffuse happiness; he was at all times bountiful and munificent in his gifts. As his possessions were great, it was his duty to give largely; but still, even so viewed, his was a bountiful hand. He dealt with money as one who, if he knew its value, with how much toil and anxiety it had been won by him, felt also that God has impressed wealth with a trust, and that the trustee must pass his accounts. He gave much, and by preference he gave in secret. He gave also with delicacy of manner, and the nice feelings of a gentleman. His was no narrow or one-sided beneficence. He knew no distinction of politics or creed when a man needed help. He was a moral and religious man. He was grave in exterior, yet a humorous man, with a quiet relish of fun. He had small respect for a man of idle life—for any one, in short, who was not useful; and neither fashion nor rank, without good service of some sort, won any allegiance from him. He was the true child of commerce. The productive industry of England, its value and its power—these were his abiding themes.'*

It was chiefly with the design of forwarding that industry that he entered Parliament as member for Tamworth, in 1790, to hold his seat in seven successive houses, for thirty years in all.† An honest Tory, he regarded Pitt as his ideal statesman. 'He supported him in nearly all his measures throughout twelve years. So heartily did he approve of his protracted war with France, that in 1797 he subscribed 10,000*l.* to a voluntary fund in its aid; and in 1798 he

* Sir Lawrence Peel, pp. 36, 37.

† Elected first in 1790, he was re-elected in 1796, 1802, 1806, 1807, 1812, and 1818.

raised, chiefly among his own workmen at Bury, six companies of Bury Royal Volunteers.* In 1799, at Pitt's request, he made a famous speech in support of the proposed union with Ireland, which is said to have exerted a marked influence upon the people of both nations, showing as it did what great advantages would result to both from the breaking down of jealousies and the establishment of one strong government and one code of laws.† In April, 1802, he supported the Bank Restriction Act, in a speech which went so far as to advocate a permanent inconvertible paper currency;‡ and in May, 1803, when many of Pitt's friends were deserting him, he stood forward as his eloquent champion. "No other minister," he said, after more general defence of his policy, "has ever understood so well the commercial interests of his country; no one before him has seen so clearly that the true sources of the greatness of England lie in its productive industry. I believe that to the measures of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer I owe the liberty of delivering my sentiments in this house, and that to him I owe the possession of that wealth and rise in the world which my industry has acquired. And I do not speak solely of myself; the same may be said of every individual whose industry has succeeded under his protection. He has been the benefactor of his country. He has neglected no one's interest but his own."§

Slavery was almost the only question on which Sir Robert Peel—he had been made a baronet on the 29th of November, 1800‖—disagreed with Pitt. 'The Africans,' he maintained, 'were not sufficiently matured by civilization to understand or enjoy the rights of freemen; and to give them liberty, without first training them to use it, would

* *Public Characters of* 1803-4 (London, 1804), pp. 15–17.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 19–24. ‡ TAYLOR, vol. i., pp. 14, 15.

§ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. c., part i., p. 557; SIR LAWRENCE PEEL, p. 42.

‖ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. c., part i., p. 557.

be like putting a deadly weapon in the hands of a madman.'* Perhaps he was right in that. At any rate he showed his good sense and real charity by urging the prior claims of the slaves abounding in England, and most of all in his own county of Lancashire. In 1802 he carried through Parliament a bill 'to ameliorate the condition of the apprentices in the cotton and woollen trades.'† Finding that insufficient, he introduced a fresh bill in 1815, intended to forbid the employment in factories of children under ten years of age, or the employment for more than ten hours a-day of children between ten and sixteen years old.‡ The bill failed, as did another which he brought forward in the following year, urging the same measures on behalf of the children, and also proposing to limit the hours of adult labour. In 1816 there was some stir throughout the country on the occasion of fourteen poor children being burnt to death while at nightwork in a factory. Thereupon Sir Robert Peel made one more philanthropic effort—somewhat less philanthropic, however, than before, as there seemed no chance of his original proposal being adopted by Parliament. 'He now,' he said, 'recommended that children employed in cotton factories should, from nine to sixteen, be under the protection of Parliament, and before nine that they should not be admitted; that they should be employed eleven hours, which, with one hour and a half for meals, made twelve hours and a half. It was his intention, if possible, to prevent the recurrence of such a misfortune as that which had recently taken place. He knew that the iniquitous practice of working children at a time when their masters were in bed too often prevailed. He was ashamed to own that he had himself been concerned when that proceeding had been suffered; but he hoped the House would interfere and prevent it for the future. It was his wish to have no nightwork at all in factories.'§

* Taylor. † *Public Characters of* 1803–4, p. 27.
‡ Taylor, vol. i., p. 28. § *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Peel's wishes were not realized in his lifetime. In many other matters of commercial legislation, however, his voice had weight in the House. In 1808 he opposed Sheridan's bill for limiting the number of apprentices to be taken by calico-printers, as well as Rose's proposal for fixing a minimum of the wages to be paid to cotton-spinners.* He also resisted various measures for enhancing or interfering with the price of food. The only basis of national prosperity was in free-trade. Any meddling with the market-price, either of labour or of the necessaries of life, he maintained, was objectionable: any scheme for unduly favouring the working-classes would only increase their troubles by inducing capitalists to withdraw their money from trade.

In 1812 Sir Robert Peel took a leading part in the efforts to make public recompense to Samuel Crompton for his invention of the spinning-mule. At the close of 1811 it was found that upwards of four and half million mule-spindles were used in various parts of England, in spinning about forty million pounds of cotton-wool each year, steady occupation being thus afforded to seventy thousand workpeople, besides a hundred and fifty thousand more employed in weaving the yarn thus spun.† Yet Crompton had gained nothing by his invention. Arkwright, prudently securing patent rights for an invention of much less moment, and one that was hardly his at all, had become a rich and famous man. Crompton, having taken no such precautions, was still neglected, and, therefore, in 1811, determined to bring his case before Parliament. Sir Robert Peel was one of its most energetic supporters. He was one of the committee appointed in March, 1812, to make investigations and advise the House as to the compensation to be made. He was discussing the matter in the lobby of the House of Commons on the 11th of May, with John Blackburne, Member of Parliament for Lancashire, and Crompton himself, when Perceval came up to them. Crompton modestly fell back

* Taylor, p. 17. † French, *Life of Crompton*, pp. 149, 150.

before he was perceived, and hardly heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer say to the others, "You will be glad to know that we mean to propose 20,000*l.* for Crompton; do you think that will be satisfactory?"* They were almost the last words spoken by him. As Crompton walked away the madman Bellingham hurried up, and in a few minutes more Percival was cruelly assassinated.

Thereby Crompton suffered with the world at large, and suffered more than most. He had hoped for a compensation of 50,000*l.*, although, when Peel asked how much he would be satisfied with, he haughtily replied. "Sir Robert, this is working at the wrong end. I entertain no doubt of the Parliament acting according to their own dignified character, and not doing a mean or little thing, if the case is fairly brought before them."† Perhaps he would have been satisfied with the 20,000*l.* designed by Perceval; but, Perceval being dead, he received only a quarter of that amount. Crompton is supposed to have blamed Peel as the instigator of this beggarly payment.‡ But there seems to have been no reason for the charge.

Sir Robert Peel's plans for helping trade were not always wise. During the great commercial depression of 1811 he induced Parliament to sanction the issue of exchequer bills to the extent of 3,000,000*l.*, to merchants and manufacturers who could give suitable guarantee for the employment of the money within reasonable time. That was an infringement of the principles of free-trade, and did not work well. Then, in 1813, he produced a very objectionable scheme for reducing taxation by applying part of the sinking-fund to the current expenses of the nation.§

A better financier and statesman was his eldest son Robert. This son was born in 1788. We are told how the father, twice disappointed by the birth of daughters, when he heard that at last a son was born to him, fell on

* French, *Life of Crompton*, p. 160.
† *Ibid.*, p. 166.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 210.
§ Taylor, vol. i., p. 18.

his knees and vowed that he would give up his child to the service of his country.* The vow was well kept. All the home-training and all the schooling were planned with a view to his education as an orator, a statesman, and a patriot. Wonderfully significant was Lord Byron's account of his schoolmate at Harrow:—'Peel was my form-fellow, and we were both at the top of our remove. We were on good terms; but his brother was my intimate friend. There were always great hopes of Peel amongst us all, masters and scholars, and he has not disappointed them. As a scholar he was greatly my superior: as a declaimer and actor I was reckoned at least his equal: as a schoolboy, out of school, I was always in scrapes, and he never; and in school he always knew his lesson, and I rarely; but when I knew it I knew it nearly as well. In general information, history, &c., I think I was his superior, as well as of most boys of my standing.' The boy who was never in scrapes, and who always knew his lessons, must have been rather a tame fellow. But young Peel's brains were well worked. He entered Parliament in 1809, when he was only one-and-twenty; and in 1812 he was Secretary of State for Ireland, —'a raw youth,' as O'Connell complained, 'squeezed out of the workings of I know not what factory, and not past the foppery of perfumed handkerchiefs and thin shoes.' O'Connell had some ground for his dislike. But Peel satisfied his party, and did his work honestly, following his father's training by making it one of his great objects to foster the trade of Ireland, and to place its merchants and manufacturers on a par with their neighbours in England.

In two of the measures for which Robert Peel the younger was afterwards famous he was anticipated by his father. In 1813 the first Sir Robert opposed the tax on cotton;† and in 1815, when the Corn Laws were introduced by Mr. Frederick Robinson, afterwards Earl of Ripon, he steadfastly resisted

* Sir Lawrence Peel, pp. 40, 41. † Taylor, vol. i., pp. 19, 20.

them. It was an error, he said, to suppose that the interests of the landholder and the manufacturer were conflicting or incompatible; they were one and the same; the success or ruin of the one class must tend to the success or ruin of the other. The whole community was enriched by the sale of manufactures; all needed to be fed alike by agricultural produce.* That was the argument, also, of the second Sir Robert Peel, twenty-seven years later.

On one remarkable occasion, father and son were at variance. In the spring of 1819 the young man was elected chairman of the Currency Committee, appointed to devise a way of helping both the Bank of England and the country out of difficulties attributed to the old Bank Restriction Act of 1797. By that Act the Bank was allowed to refuse payment in cash for its notes, and there was, in consequence, a large issue of paper money, with no equivalent of bullion in the strong boxes of the Bank. This measure the first Sir Robert had supported in 1802, on the plea that it was a great boon to the trading community, and that, instead of its abrogation, the thing most needed was a clearer and more absolute system of inconvertible paper currency. Other financiers thought differently. It was complained that this paper money had already deteriorated, and would deteriorate more and more, and that trade was seriously damaged by the inequality between the paper pound and the gold pound; and to this view young Peel, thinking as it seems with his father when he entered the Committee, was converted in the course of its deliberations. Therefore, on the 24th of May, he introduced the Currency Bill, known henceforth as Sir Robert Peel's Act of 1819, the parent of Peel's more famous Bank Charter Act of 1844. Before that, at the first sitting of the House, his father presented a petition from many leading merchants of London, praying for the rejection of the bill. "To-night," he said in so doing, "I shall have to oppose a

* Taylor, vol. i., p. 21.

very near and dear relation; but, while it is my own sentiment that I have a duty to perform, I respect those who do theirs, and who consider that duty to be paramount to all other considerations. I have mentioned the name of Mr. Pitt. My own impression is certainly a strong one in favour of that great man. I have always thought him the first man in the country. I well remember, when the relation I have alluded to was a child, I observed to some friends that the man who discharged his duty to his country in the manner Mr. Pitt had done was the man of all the world the most to be admired and the most to be imitated; and I thought at that moment that, if my life and that of my dear relation should be spared, I would one day present him to his country, to follow in the same path. It is very natural that such should be my wish; and I will only say further of him that, though he is deviating from the proper path in this instance, his head and heart are in the right place, and I think they will soon recall him to the right way."*

Those sentences are very note-worthy. They clearly reflect the admirable character of the first Sir Robert Peel. They called forth some equally characteristic sentences from his son. "Many difficulties," said Mr. Peel, in the clever speech with which he introduced and carried through his Bill, "presented themselves to me in discussing this question. Among them is one which it pains me to observe—I mean, the necessity I am under of opposing myself to an authority to which I have always bowed from my youth up, and to which I hope I shall always continue to bow with deference. My excuse now is, that I have a great public duty imposed upon me, and that, whatever may be my private feelings, from that duty I must not shrink."†

That was the last episode of note in Sir Robert's Parliamentary career. He resigned his seat next year, the seventieth of his life. Some time before he had left all commercial affairs to the management of his sons. Henceforth

* Taylor, vol. i. † *Ibid.*

he lived quietly, in the enjoyment of a princely fortune, at Drayton Park, near Tamworth.* Many instances are given of the way in which, both now and in all the earlier years, he used his wealth. Hating all idle show, and caring little for gay society, he sought the company of honest friends, and strove to have everything about him and belonging to him

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as genuine, good, and thorough in its character as possible. If he did not always succeed in this, the fault was in his defective education and the narrowing influences of a youth devoted to commercial pursuits. Of picture-collecting he was especially fond, and he made it a rule never to buy without first seeking counsel of his good friend Wilkie.

* During most of the previous thirty years he had lived still more quietly at Chamber Hall, near Bury, a house built for him on his marriage, with an entrance hall, two parlours, a kitchen on the ground-floor, and corresponding rooms above. The front parlour served as a counting-house, and, after a time, the back yard was built upon for a packing-room.—*The Peel Family.*

Once, we are told, the rule was broken; and the painter was taken, after dinner, to admire a choice relic of one of the old masters lately bought by Sir Robert. Honest David looked with some astonishment, and then with an amused face by no means agreeable to the connoisseur. "Well, sir, what do you think of it?" he asked. "It is not for me," answered Wilkie, "to find fault with the painting or to condemn your taste in selecting it; but do you see those initials?" pointing to a small D. W. in the corner. The picture was one of Wilkie's own; and Sir Robert had been played upon by the dealer of whom he had bought it. "Well," he said, when he understood his blunder, "I see I have been deceived; but I have never before been cheated so much to my own satisfaction."

Sir Robert Peel did not spend all his spare money in picture-buying. He was a governor of Christ's Hospital and president of the House of Recovery in Manchester, to which, as well as to many other benevolent institutions, he gave freely. To the Society for Benefiting the Condition of the Poor, he made, in 1801, a donation of 1,000*l.*, and he was a constant friend and benefactor to the poor of Bury and Tamworth.* He built and endowed a chapel at Fazeley in Staffordshire, and by his will, besides many other charitable bequests, 6,000*l.* were left for the establishment of a free-school in the same village. Many anecdotes are preserved of his charitable work in individual cases.

We are told of an instance in which a large cotton house in Manchester, for many years engaged in active though generous rivalry with his own, had, by immense speculations, brought itself, in 1801, almost to bankruptcy. Sir Robert Peel hearing of it, and knowing the house was honourable, secretly advanced, without security, upwards of 14,000*l.*, and so enabled it to tide over its difficulties.†

In the same year he heard of the failure of a house in which two young men, sons of a merchant with whom he had

* *Public Characters of* 1803-4, pp. 39, 40. † *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 41.

had dealings, had lost not only their own wealth, but also the portions, 5,000*l.* apiece, of their three sisters. To each of these sisters he sent, with all possible delicacy, a cheque for 1,000*l.*, and he used his influence to procure for their brothers respectable employment in which they might retrieve their positions.*

Then there was a clergyman of whom old Sir Robert had learned to think so highly that he voluntarily sought and obtained from the Chancellor the promise of a vacant living. Before it could be granted, however, there were ministerial changes, and the living found its way to other hands. Sir Robert Peel straightway bought a presentation of equal value and handed it to his friend.†

Other stories, giving like evidence of a generous disposition, are on record; but we are told, and we can well believe, that Sir Robert Peel loved best to do his charities in secret. He also deemed it best to give freely of his wealth in his lifetime, instead of hoarding it up for ostentatious benevolence after death. Yet he was one of the richest men in England when he died. Drayton Manor and other large estates in Staffordshire and Warwickshire descended to his eldest son, on whom he had settled 9,000*l.* a year from the time of his entering Parliament, when he was one-and-twenty. To each of his five younger sons a sum of 135,000*l.* was left; and his three surviving daughters were enriched to the extent of 53,000*l.* apiece.

Living in happy retirement, the good old man had the gratification of seeing the steady and honourable advancement of the son whom he had done his best to make a second Pitt. A stanch Tory, save on some questions of free-trade, he could not sympathise with that son's gradual change of politics, and he was especially grieved, it was said, at his handling of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill in 1829. But he was an honest and independent man himself, and he not only tolerated but honoured the honesty and independence

* *Public Characters of* 1803–4, p. 42. † *Ibid.*, p. 40.

of others, whether his own kindred or strangers, even when they differed most from him.

On his seventy-eighth birthday, in 1828, Sir Robert Peel was able to assemble fifty children and grandchildren at Drayton. To each of them he gave a silver medal in memory of the occasion. He died on the 3rd of May, 1830. 'A few days before his death,' we are told, 'feeling himself more than usually alert, he invited three of his nephews to dine with him. At dinner he asked if the champagne was good, and being told that it was, he drank a glass of it. The wine raised his spirits, and he conversed with much animation about past times. After dinner they played at whist; and after a rubber or two Mr. Willock'— one of the nephews—'perceiving that his uncle's hand shook a little as he dealt the cards, offered to deal for him. "No, no, Robert," he said; "if I cannot deal my own cards, it is time to give up the game;" and with this characteristic speech he broke up the rubber.'* His game of life, a singularly noble and attractive one, was over.

Of his great son's after-life we have not to speak. The principles implanted in him by his merchant father were his guides to the last, and in many of his legislative measures, in his Bank Charter Act, and in his anti-Corn-Law opposition most of all, he exercised very notable influence on mercantile history; but he was in no sense himself a merchant. In the world of commerce the Peels most to be remembered, the men to be honoured as the greatest of all early promoters of Manchester trade and of the trade that has enriched all the towns round Manchester, are Robert Peel, the beginner of calico-printing in Blackburn, and Robert Peel, the master of the factory-village at Bury.

* Sir Lawrence Peel, p. 55.

CHAPTER XXII.

SOME MERCHANTS OF GLASGOW; ESPECIALLY PATRICK COLQUHOUN, DAVID DALE, AND THE MONTEITHS.

[1420–1848.]

THE commercial history of Glasgow begins with a William Elphinstone, contemporary with William Canynge of Bristol. About the year 1420 he was famous for his shipments of pickled salmon and dried herrings to France and other parts of Europe, for which he received wine and brandy in exchange.* The Bishop Elphinstone who founded the University of Aberdeen was his son, and the proceeds of the old merchant's trade are said to have greatly helped on the good work. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, while the University was being built, Archibald Lyon, youngest son o Lord Glamis, the Earl of Strathmore, settled in Glasgow, and lived with Archbishop Gavin Douglas in old Glasgow Castle. He married a Mistress Margaret Douglas, and became a merchant. 'He undertook great voyages and adventures in trading,' according to the old chronicler, 'to Poland, France, and Holland. His endeavours were wonderfully blessed with success, so that he acquired considerable lands in and about the city of Glasgow. He built'—in 1536, as it is supposed—'a great lodging for himself and family upon the south side of the Gallowgate Street. Thereafter he built four closes of houses and forty-four shops, high

* ANDERSON, vol. i., p. 453; *Beauties of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1806), vol. iii., p. 275.

and low, on the south side of the Gallowgate, and a part of the east side of the Saltmarket.' He lived to be ninety-five years old. He had a son named Archibald, whose son George was another famous merchant of Glasgow; and his three daughters were all wedded to merchants, ancestors of other merchants.*

Old Archibald Lyon must be considered the father of Glasgow. 'No other nobleman's youngest son in Scotland,' says his first panegyrist, 'can boast of such an opulent offspring.'† So important had Glasgow commerce become during the lifetime of his grandchildren, and so much were they and their fellow-merchants or tradesmen given to quarrelling among themselves, and with the foreigners who now began to settle in the neighbourhood for purposes of commerce, that their relationship with one another, and their position in the town, had to be made subjects of legislation. 'At that time,' we are told, 'the traders of Glasgow were by far more numerous than the merchants, so as they claimed not only as great a share and interest in the government of the city, but also the right of being equal sharers with the merchants in seafaring trade; to which the merchants were altogether averse, affirming that they were to hold every one to his trade, and not meddle with theirs. Upon which there arose terrible heats, strifes, and animosities betwixt them, which was like to end with shedding of blood; for the trades rose up against the merchants.'‡ Among the wholesale and the retail dealers of Glasgow there were, about the year 1600, as great jealousies as there had been in London, a century earlier, between the merchant adventurers and the members of the trading guilds who desired to share their commercial advantages. In this case the differences were settled by the establishment, in 1605, of a guildery, for regulating and maintaining the limits of trade and commerce, having at its head a dean, who was to be 'a merchant,

* John M'Ure, *alias* Campbell, *View of the City of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1736), pp. 115, 135.

† *Ibid.*, p. 116.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

a merchant sailor, and a merchant venturer.' He was to be assisted by a provost and bailies, a council and deacons, half of them being merchants, the other half craftsmen; and none but guild brothers were in future to be allowed to trade or traffic in Glasgow.*

Many of these guild-brothers, living in the seventeenth century, were famous men of business. One of them, William Simpson, in or near the year 1636, built two ships and traded to Flanders, Poland, France, and Dantzic. 'He built great houses in Glasgow, within the Trongate, with great orchards,' we are told, 'and four large barns and great gardens at the back thereof.'†

One of the merchants, living at that time in Glasgow, was John Anderson, the first importer into those parts of Scotland of French light wines.‡ Another and a greater, was Walter Gibson, who began life as a brewer and malt-maker, and then proceeded to become a regular merchant. In 1668 he cured and packed 300 lasts or herrings, each containing twelve barrels, and worth 6*l.* of Scottish money, and shipped them to Saint Martin's, in France, in a Dutch vessel of 450 tons burthen. For each barrel of herrings, it is recorded, he obtained a barrel of brandy and a crown. Some of the crowns were spent in buying salt; which, with the brandy, had so good a market in Glasgow, that out of the profits Gibson was able to purchase the Dutch ship and two other vessels, almost as large, with which he 'set to his fellow-citizens an example of extensive traffic to different parts of Europe.' He is even reported to have established the sale and manufacture of iron in Glasgow.§

About this time, too, there was a William Wilson, who went from Flakefield to settle as a merchant in Glasgow,

* M'Ure., pp. 166–191. An interesting account of the Merchants' and Trades' Houses of Glasgow is given as an introduction to *Glasgow Past and Present*, Glasgow, 1851, a very valuable collection of notes by local antiquaries, edited by Mr. James Pagan.

† M'Ure., p. 202.

‡ Gibson, *History of Glasgow*, Glasgow, 1777, p. 205.

§ Gibson, p. 205; M'Ure, pp. 206, 207; *Beauties of Scotland*, p. 205.

and there, as there were other Wilsons, to be known as William Flakefield. He had a son, William, whom he apprenticed to a weaver. But the lad, not quite liking the business, enlisted, near 1670, in the Cameronians, and afterwards joined the famous regiment of Scots Guards in France. He lived some years abroad, until, having met with a blue and white check handkerchief, woven in Germany, a novelty in those days, it occurred to him that he would try and make others like it. Therefore, in 1700, he returned to Glasgow, and, improving upon his old apprenticeship, set about the work. 'A few spindles of yarn fit for his purpose,' says the old biographer, 'was all, at that time, that William Flakefield could collect, the which was but ill-bleached, and the blue not very dark. They were, however, the best that could be found in Glasgow. About two dozen of pocket handkerchiefs composed the first web. When the half was woven, he cut out the cloth and took it to the merchants. They were pleased with the novelty of the blue and white stripes, and especially with the delicate texture of the cloth, which was thin set in comparison with the Hollands that they generally dealt in. The new adventurer asked no more for his web than the net price of the materials, and the ordinary wages for his work. All he asked was readily paid him, and he went home rejoicing that his attempts were not unsuccessful. This dozen of handkerchiefs, the first of the kind ever made in Britain, was disposed of in a few days.' Others were disposed of in abundance as quickly as they could be made. Merchants and weavers from all parts came to learn the trick, and many settled down in Glasgow to practice it with success. 'The number of looms daily increased, so that Glasgow became famous for that branch of the linen trade. The checks were followed by the blunks, or linen cloth for printing, and to these,' it was written in 1793, 'is now added the muslin trade.'*

* David Ure, *History of Rutherglen and East Kilbride* (Glasgow, 1793), pp. 169–172.

William Flakefield should have an honourable place in the commercial history of Glasgow; but he was forgotten even in his lifetime. He died poor and unknown, after earning a meagre subsistence as a town drummer.*

He was not the only man, however, who at this time helped to forward the manufacturing greatness of Scotland. From the middle of the seventeenth century, Gallowgate, then the chief resort of wholesale traders of all classes, was crowded with woollen and hardware manufacturers, soap-boilers, sugar-refiners, and the like. In 1669, five merchants, named John Cross, James Peadie, John Luke, George Bogle, and Robert Cross, clubbed together and built the East Sugar House, the pride of Scotchmen in that day, a wonderful series of buildings for boiling sugar, under the direction of an expert master-boiler brought over from Germany on purpose. The Sugar House was a source of wealth to many families during several generations.†

In all sorts of ways the commercial energy of Glasgow was apparent during the latter part of the seventeenth century. The water at Broomielaw being found not deep enough for the larger ships that now came to be built, it was resolved to establish a port nearer the mouth of the Clyde. With that intent thirteen acres of ground, adjoining the village of Newark, were purchased by the corporation in 1662, and laid out in streets and harbours, to be quickly put to use.‡ The ambitious disposition of Glasgow merchants at this time is illustrated by the proposal of John Sprent, 'merchant and citizen of Glasgow,' who had made much wealth through selling herrings in many parts of the world for sixpence apiece, to send ships to Guinea thence to procure gold-dust and elephants' teeth in exchange for 'linens and woollen manufactures, knives, scissors, small looking-glasses, and other toys, strong water, tobacco and beads, and pewter

* David Ure, *History of Rutherglen and East Kilbride*, p. 172.

† *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. i., p. 45.

‡ Cleland, *Annals of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1829), p. 28.

dishes. Glasgow plaids and blue bonnets,' he added, 'may do for their kings and queens.'*

That suggestion was not adopted; but at the time of its appearance, Glasgow was about to embark on a much more profitable trade. A great change came with the establishment of the Union in 1707. Hitherto the Glasgow merchants had gone only to continental towns; and having to make a long voyage round, either southwards or northwards, they found it hard to compete with the people of Edinburgh, Dundee, and other earlier haunts of commerce. By the Union Scotland was made a sharer in the colonial wealth of England, and henceforth Glasgow, the capital of western Scotland, began to advance from the same causes, and with as much rapidity as Liverpool and Manchester. Its merchants at once began to follow the example of Liverpool, and send vessels—at first they were only hired vessels, Glasgow having no shipping of its own strong enough for crossing the Atlantic—to the American and West Indian ports. These vessels carried out clothing and hardware, and brought back tobacco. 'A supercargo went out with every vessel,' we are told, 'who bartered his goods for tobacco, until such time as he had either sold all his goods, or procured as much tobacco as was sufficient to load his vessel. He then returned immediately, and, if any of his goods remained unsold, he brought them home with him.'†

The first venture made by Glasgow in the tobacco trade was in or very soon after the year 1707. The captain of the vessel was appointed to act as supercargo. 'This person,' we are told, 'although a shrewd man, knew nothing of accounts; and when, on his return, he was asked by his employers for a statement of how the adventure had turned out, told them he could give them none, but there were its proceeds; and threw down upon the table a large hoggar—that is, a stocking—stuffed to the top with coin. The ad-

* Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs* (Glasgow, 1857), pp. 30, 31.

† Gibson, p. 206.

venture had been a profitable one; and his employers conceived that if an uneducated, untrained person had been so successful, their gains would have been still greater had a person versed in accounts been sent with it. Under this impression they immediately despatched a second adventure, with a supercargo, highly recommanded for a knowledge of accounts, who produced to them a beautifully made-out statement of his transactions, but no hoggar.'*

Those enterprises, like all others of the time, were conducted by a company of traders. 'Up to the middle of the eighteenth century, commercial concerns, whether for manufactures or for foreign trades, were in general carried on by what might be termed joint-stock companies of credit: six or eight responsible individuals having formed themselves into a company, advanced each into the concern a few hundred pounds, and borrowed on the personal bonds of the company whatever further capital was required for the undertaking. It was not till commercial capital, at a later period, had grown up in the country that individuals, or even companies trading extensively on their own capital, were to be found.' So it was with the Virginia trade. 'One of the partners acted as manager, and the others did not interfere. The transactions consisted in purchasing goods for the shipments made twice a year, and making sales of the tobacco which they received in return. The goods were bought upon twelve months' credit; and when a shipment came to be paid off, the manager sent notice to the different furnishers to meet him on such a day, at such a wine-shop, with their accounts to be discharged. They then received the payment of their accounts, and along with it a glass of wine each, for which they paid. These wine-shops were opposite to the Tontine Exchange, and no business was transacted but in one of them.'†

* *Statistical Account of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1845), vol. vi., pp. 230, 231, quoting from the Scrap Book of DUGALD BANNATYNE.

† *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. vi., pp. 230, 231:—'This curious

GLASGOW IN 1760.

Vol. II., page 181.

Those were the rude beginnings of Glasgow's trade with America. In 1718 the first home-built ship went out for tobacco; and within a few years so many were on the seas, that great opposition was raised by the rival merchants of Bristol, Liverpool, and Whitehaven. In the year 1721, 'a most terrible confederacy was entered into by almost all the tobacco merchants in South Britain.' By them the Glasgow merchants were accused of all sorts of frauds, both upon their neighbours and upon the Exchequer, and accordingly a commission was sent down from the Treasury to make inquiries as to the alleged abuses. This commission reported that the complaints of the merchants of London, Liverpool, and Whitehaven were groundless, and that they proceeded from a spirit of envy, and not from a regard to the interest of trade or the King's revenue.' That decision was not at all to the liking of the southern traders. Therefore they made interest with the House of Commons, and procured a new body of commissioners, whose verdict, given in 1723, was against the people of Glasgow. Hence arose lawsuits and quarrels of all sorts without number, very prejudicial for a time to the welfare of the new centre of commerce. In 1723, the Glasgow merchants possessed three-and-twenty tobacco ships. In 1735, they had only twenty-seven vessels of all classes trading with America and the West Indies. But the hindrance was only temporary. In 1735 the entire shipping of Glasgow amounted to about 5,600 tons. By 1771 it had risen to nearly 60,000 tons.*

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mode of paying off of these shipments,' it is added, 'was contrived with a view to furnish aid to some well-born young woman, whose parents had fallen into bad circumstances, whom it was customary to place in one of those shops in the same way that, at an after period, such a person would have been put into a milliner's shop.'

* The trade reports of the latter year are worth analysing. We find that the manufactures of Glasgow at this time comprised linens, calicoes, lawns, and cambrics, cotton and woollen goods in great quantities, leather, soap, hardware, and jewellery, with a net value in all of about 450,000*l.* The imports consisted of 46,055,139 lbs. of tobacco, and some 50,000 cubic feet of timber, besides skins and other miscellaneous articles from the North

In 1740 there were more than a hundred notable merchants in Glasgow. Some of them are described as 'sea-adventurers, trading to sundry places in Europe, Africa, and America.' The rest formed 'a great company, undertaking the trade to Virginia, the Carribean Islands, Barbadoes, New England, Saint Christophers, Montserrat, and other colonies in America."* These latter were the tobacco-lords, famous for their wealth, whereby they generally came to be bankers as well, and for the pomp and pride which that wealth engendered. Satirists are fond of telling how, in scarlet coats, cocked hats, and powdered wigs, they strutted up and down the Plainstanes, the only bit of pavement then in Glasgow, covering three or four hundred yards of road in front of the Town Hall and the adjoining offices—talking grandly to one another, and nodding haughtily to the humbler folk who came to do them homage.† But they were, for the most part, worthy, enterprising men.

One of the oldest of them was Andrew Buchanan, who in 1719 began to acquire property near the street named after

American ports of Boston and Falmouth in Philadelphia, Maryland in Virginia, and the North Carolina towns; 179,544 gallons of rum, 47,357 lbs. of sugar, and 59,434 lbs. of cotton from the West Indian islands of Antigua, Grenada, Jamaica, Nevis, St. Kitts, St. Vincent, and Honduras; 39,922 bushels of salt, 32,000 gallons of wine, and 32,250 lemons, besides miscellaneous groceries from Italy, Portugal, and the South of Europe; and great quantities of flax and linen articles from Germany, Poland, and Russia. Much greater quantities of linen came from Ireland: 731,118 yards from Dublin, 361,502 from Belfast, and 7,671 from other towns, making a total of 1,100,291 yards; to which must be added 4,022 barrels of salt-beef, besides hams, butter, and other goods from several other Irish towns, with Cork at their head. In return for these commodities, large supplies of ale, rum, carpets, haberdasheries, and tobacco were sent to Ireland. Linen and woollen goods, leather, hardware, and all sorts of English manufactures were despatched to North America and the West Indies; and tobacco was the staple export to the European countries, 20,774,813 lbs. being sent to France, 15,000,000 lbs. to Holland, 4,000,000 lbs. to Germany, 170,853 lbs. to Italy, 140,852 lbs. to Minorca, and smaller quantities to Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Russia.—GIBSON, pp. 212–234, 248.

* M'Ure.

† STRANG. pp. 35–37, and *Glasgow, Past and Present*, passim.

him. In 1740 he was Provost of Glasgow, and in 1745, when the rebels roughly called upon him for a contribution of 500*l.* to their exchequer, he bade them plunder his house, if they must, but refused willingly to help them with a farthing.* He died soon after that, leaving his son George Buchanan, also a great foreign merchant and importer of tobacco, to build the Old Virginia House, in 1752.† He lived in his mansion seventeen years, and a few months after his death, in 1769, it was sold to Alexander Speirs, the richest of all the tobacco lords.‡

'I once asked the late Provost Cochrane of Glasgow, who was eminently wise, and who has been a merchant there for seventy years,' said Sir John Dalrymple, in 1788, 'to what causes he imputed the sudden rise of Glasgow. He said it was all owing to four young men of talent and spirit, who started at one time in business, and whose successes gave example to the rest. The four had not 10,000*l.* amongst them when they began.'§ Something, but certainly not all, was owing to these four enterprising merchants. They were William Cunningham, of Lainshaw; Henry Ritchie, of Busbie; Alexander Speirs, of Elderslie; and John Glassford, of Dougaldstone. They and their fellow-merchants, of whom there were two-and-forty, had brought the tobacco-trade to such a state of prosperity that, of the 90,000 hogsheads brought into Great Britain in 1772, 49,000 were brought to Glasgow; and of that quantity Speirs's consignment amounted to 6,035 hogsheads, a fifteenth of the entire importation of the country, John Glassford's to 4,506. Glassford had a fleet of twenty-five ships of his own, which he employed solely in his own trade. During the years of his greatest business, he is said to have imported 500,000*l.*'s worth of goods each year. He died in 1783.‖

* Strang, p. 24. † *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. ii., p. 167.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 199; vol. iii., p. 610 (Edinburgh, 1788).
§ Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. ii., Appendix.
‖ *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. ii., p. 176.

In that year, too, the tobacco trade of Glasgow had begun to die. The American war threw obstacles in its way, and so left room for the greater development of other branches of commerce, and the full unfolding of the wealth and prosperity of Glasgow.

The man who, perhaps, did more than any other to bring about this good result, was Patrick Colquhoun. Descended, through both his parents, from the old family of Colquhouns, he was born on the 14th of March, 1745, at Dumbarton. There his father, an old class-fellow of Smollett's, served as local judge and registrar of county records. But the boy seems to have been an orphan, and not very well off, before he was sixteen years old. Then, or soon after, he emigrated to Virginia, to reside in its eastern part, separated by Chesapeake Bay from the centre of the colony. There he occupied some sort of mercantile position, and twice each year, we are told, he crossed the water to trade with the people who came up to the General Courts at Richmond. He himself was fond of listening to and joining in the legal talk. His chief friends in America were lawyers and law students, among whom he added much to the scanty education he had received at home, and developed a taste, strong and healthy all through life, for political economy and social science. But ill health brought him back to Scotland in 1766.*

In 1767, when he was two-and-twenty years of age, he started as a merchant in Glasgow,† there chiefly to reside for another term of two-and-twenty years. Of his own commercial dealings we hear very little. He was one of those patriotic merchants who, without neglecting their duties to themselves and their immediate dependents, make it their chief business to study the welfare of society at large. All good works came naturally to Colquhoun, but he devoted himself especially to the promotion of British commerce and the advance-

* *Biographical Sketch of the Life and Writings of Patrick Colquhoun*, by Ἰατρος (London, 1818), p. 5.

† *Ibid.*, p. 6.

ment of Glasgow among its great places of resort. In 1776, during the American war, he was one of fourteen principal contributors to a fund for raising a Glasgow regiment of troops. In 1779, and again in 1780, he visited London to hold conferences on trade with Lord North, then Premier, and to work through Parliament a Bill of considerable importance to the commerce of Scotland; and in the latter year he was chosen a local magistrate and a member of the City

PATRICK COLQUHOUN OF GLASGOW.

Council of Glasgow. In 1781 he started a scheme for building a Glasgow Coffee-House, to be developed into the Chamber of Commerce. He also procured the improvement of the Glasgow Exchange, and so led to the construction of a new and splendid building. In 1781, moreover, he was chosen a commissioner from Glasgow to a convention of the royal burghs of Scotland, then sitting at Edinburgh; and next year he came to London, as agent of that convention, to obtain an Act of Parliament, placing the linen

manufacturers of North Britain on a par with those of Ireland.*

Near the end of 1782 the building appointed for the Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures of the City of Glasgow was completed and opened amid great rejoicings. Colquhoun was elected its first chairman, to continue in office till 1786; and it started with about three hundred members.† It was designed for the consideration of all plans and proposals for protecting and improving every branch of domestic trade and manufacture, and the establishment of rules for the guidance and extension of all sorts of foreign trade. It was also designed to give help and advice to all individual traders, both in the immediate advancement of their callings and in furtherance of their dealings with the Government, with Parliament, or with foreign countries, and to 'procure relief or redress in every grievance, hardship, oppression, or inconvenience affecting any particular branch of trade or manufacture carried on by the members of the Society.' In short, as it was stated in the charter of incorporation which Colquhoun visited London to procure in the spring of 1785, it was intended 'to take cognizance of every matter and thing in the least degree connected with the interests of commerce, and to give stability and encouragement to the commerce and manufactures of the city of Glasgow and the towns and villages in the neighbourhood.'‡

That most assuredly it did. No single event in the history of Glasgow was so advantageous to its mercantile interests as this founding of the Chamber of Commerce, due altogether, as it seems, to the forethought and perseverance of Patrick Colquhoun. At this time also he began to work with his pen. In 1783 he wrote some very sensible *Observations on the Present State of the Linen and Cotton Manufactures*. In 1785 he published another work on *The Interchange of British Manufactures with Ireland*; and in

* *Biographical Sketch of Patrick Colquhoun*, pp. 6, 7. † *Ibid.*, p. 8.
‡ CLELAND, *Annals of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1816), vol. ii., pp. 377–382.

1788, at Pitt's request, and for his guidance, he prepared a minute account of the state of the cotton trade in Great Britain.* Many other books and pamphlets followed these, all giving proof of his devotion to trade and his enlightened appreciation of its character and needs. This he showed in all sorts of other ways. Often he hurried up to London to hold interviews with the ministers, with Members of Parliament, and with the great City merchants. Often he went on like errands to Manchester, Paisley, and other towns. During the later months of 1788 and the beginning of 1789 he was in Flanders and Brabant, oftenest in Ostend, at that time the great European depôt for East Indian goods, seeing how far British manufactures could be brought to compete with foreign wares. Thence he returned to London, and did his utmost for the organization of a new national machinery for the interchange of commodities with the continental towns, as well as among the great British marts. His efforts were very beneficial, though greatly crippled, we are told, by the jealousies of the great merchants of London, who were loth to have smaller people in any sort of partnership with them. To him, it seems, was chiefly due the introduction of British muslins on the Continent, soon to issue in the establishment of an immense and very profitable trade.†

In other ways, through more than thirty years, Patrick Colquhoun did great service to the nation. But his work, henceforth, had not much to do with Glasgow. For some reason unexplained—probably because, as a merchant, he had already made money enough to enable him in future to devote himself, without hindrance, to employments wholly philanthropic and altogether to his taste—he abandoned the pursuit of commerce in November, 1789.‡ That done, he quitted Glasgow and, at the age of forty-four, took up his residence in London. During one-and-thirty years he busied himself in various ways for the good of society, and

* *Biographical Sketch*, pp. 11, 13. † *Ibid.* pp. 13–16. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

especially for the advancement of commerce. He was commercial agent in London for several of the West Indian islands and some continental towns. He was also during many years, an able police magistrate. He was a frequent adviser both of the ministers of the Crown and of the great City men on matters of trade and the trading interests. He also wrote many valuable books; the most important being a treatise on *The Police of the Thames*, which led to the establishment of organized plans for preventing the serious depredations of river-thieves, and another on *The Wealth, Power, and Resources of the British Empire*, full of enlightened views and charitable doctrines. He died in 1820, at the age of seventy-five, much honoured by all the good people of London, and with so much fame induced by his philanthropic works among them that his share in the advancement of Glasgow and Glasgow commerce was almost forgotten.

But the good effects of his labours in that cause could not be forgotten. Leaving Glasgow in 1789, he left it in a very different condition from that in which he found it when he first made it his home in 1767. Glasgow was even then on the high road to prosperity, and must, in any case, have steadily grown rich and influential. But Patrick Colquhoun greatly helped it in so doing, by his own example of mercantile honour and enterprise, and by his advocacy of the highest commercial interests both at home and abroad. To him must be traced many of the enlightened views that characterised the Glasgow merchants who joined with him in the formation of the Chamber of Commerce, and whom he left to carry on his principles when he retired to London. Of these merchants the most notable of all was David Dale, in many ways a pupil of Colquhoun, though his senior by six years or more.

David Dale was born on the 6th of January, 1739, at Stewarton, in Ayrshire, where his father, breaking through the custom of his ancestors who, through many generations,

lived and died as simple farmers, had established himself as a grocer and general dealer. At first David, whose only schooling was acquired by himself in later years, was a sort of farmer's boy. Then he was apprenticed to a weaver at Paisley. Not liking his work, he ran away from it; but soon after we find him returning to the same kind of employment and serving as a weaver's lad in Hamilton. Thence he went to Glasgow, to be advanced to a clerkship in a silk-mercer's establishment; and prospering therein he was able, in 1763, to start in business on his own account. Renting a shop in High Street, five doors from the Cross, for which he paid 5*l.* a year, he sub-let half to a watchmaker for 50*s.*, and for twenty years confined himself to the other half, finding his occupation in importing linen yarn from Flanders for sale to the manufacturers in Glasgow and elsewhere. This was the trade which, according to his own phrase, "first put marrow in his bones." So profitable was it, that he was able, in 1782, while retaining his humble office, to build for himself a great house in Charlotte Street, at a cost of 6,000*l.* In 1783, in consequence of his marriage to the daughter of a rich Edinburgh merchant and banker, he was appointed agent in Glasgow of the Royal Bank of Scotland. Thereupon the watchmaker was turned out of his old quarters, that they might be converted into a banking house.*

In this year also, the first year of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, Dale made other work for himself. He invited Sir Richard Arkwright to Glasgow, with his assistance selected the site of the famous New Lanark Cotton Mills on the Clyde, and, engaging to buy from him the exclusive

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxvi., p. 770; CHAMBERS, *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen*, including a memoir of Dale by his friend Andrew Liddell (Glasgow, 1850), vol. v., pp. 162, 163; IRVING and MURRAY, *The Upper Ward of Lanarkshire Described and Delineated* (Glasgow, 1865), vol. ii., pp. 380, 381; *Glasgow, Past and Present* (Glasgow, 1851), vol. i., p. 105; vol. ii., p. 50. Dale's great house was afterwards converted into a nunnery. His garden is now covered by a school, a church, a theatre, an old clothes-market, and a model lodging-house.

right of using his spinning machine in Scotland, proceeded to expend on this enterprise most of the money he had been laying by during the previous twenty years. Just then, however, Arkwright's patent right was challenged, and David Dale was thus enabled to spend in other ways the amount he was about to pay for its use. In company with George Macintosh and a Frenchman named Papillon, he established the first Scotch works for dyeing cotton Turkey-red; and in the same year, we are told, he joined in a large undertaking for the manufacture of cotton goods.* 'The individual, who, some thirty or forty years before, was a little herdboy at Stewarton,' says his biographer, 'was now sole proprietor of, or connected as a managing partner with, several of the most extensive mercantile, manufacturing, and banking concerns of the country, the proper supervision of any of which would have absorbed the entire powers of most other men. Mr. Dale, however, was eminently qualified to sustain the numerous and varied offices which he had undertaken. Every duty being attended to in its own place and at the proper time, he was never overburdened with work, nor did he ever appear to be in a hurry. We find him successfully conducting, with strict commercial integrity, all the important enterprises in which he was embarked, together with others not included in the enumeration. Besides devoting his time and money to various benevolent schemes, he discharged the onerous duties of a magistrate of the city of Glasgow, to which he was elected in 1791, and again in 1794. Moreover, every Lord's day, and sometimes on other days, he preached the Gospel to a Congregational Church of which he was one of the elders.'†

The busy merchant had been of a religious disposition from the first; and about the year 1779 he and some others 'discarded, as unscriptural, Church government by sessions, pres-

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxvi., p. 770; *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., p. 303.

† CHAMBERS, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. v., p. 163.

byteries, and synods, maintaining that all who possessed the qualifications for the ministry, as laid down in the apostolic writings, and who were called by their brethren to the exercise of these gifts, were not only at liberty, but were bound, to exercise them for the good of their fellow-creatures, although they had never entered the portals of a college or a divinity hall. These new views, especially when acted upon by the appointment of Mr. Dale to the ministry, raised a shout of derision. He was hooted and jostled in the streets, and many times forced to take shelter under some friendly roof. Even the meeting-house did not escape the popular dislike; stones and other missiles were hurled against it, till the windows, roof, and other parts of the building were much injured.' David Dale paid no heed to this petty persecution, however, and preached on as his conscience bade him. In so doing he lost no favour with any whose favour was worth having, as was curiously shown during his magistracy in 1791. 'It was then and for a long time afterwards the practice of the magistrates and other civic functionaries to walk in procession to the Parish Church, escorted by city officers in uniform, with halberds and other tokens of authority. Mr. Dale could not, of course, accompany the procession to the Parish Church; but rather than allow a magistrate to go unescorted to any place of worship, it was arranged that a portion of the city officers should, in livery and with halberds, attend him to and from his own place of worship, and wait upon him while there.'*

Honest Dale did not suffer his religious zeal to interfere with his zealous attention to business matters; but like many other rich merchants, he was famous for his charitable disposition. During the famine years of 1782, 1791, 1792, 1793, and 1799, we learn, he chartered several ships and sent them to America, Ireland, and the Continent, there to buy all sorts of wholesome food, which, when brought to Glasgow, he caused to be sold to the poor at cost price or

* Chambers, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. v. p. 170.

less. "David Dale gives his money by sho'elfuls," the poor people of Glasgow used to say; "but God Almighty sho'els it back again."* And his charity found expression in all sorts of ways. 'He was one of the most liberal, conscientious, benevolent, and kind-hearted men I ever met with through my life,' said his son-in-law. 'His good-nature was much imposed upon, and he gave away large sums, often in mistaken charities, which were pressed upon him through his being the pastor of upwards of forty churches or congregations, dissenters from the Church of Scotland, composed chiefly of poor persons, learned in the peculiar cause of their dissent, but otherwise uninformed as to general knowledge. Mr. Dale received all these kindly and hospitably, and was truly a good pastor to them in every sense of the word. He was a bishop among them, without receiving anything from his flock; but, on the contrary, expending his private fortune freely to aid and assist them.†'

Dale was charitable, too, to persons not of his own way of thinking on religious matters. Once, it is said, a young man brought to the bank, to be discounted, a draft which excited the cashier's suspicions. The matter was referred to David Dale himself, and he, on questioning the youth, soon drew from him a confession that he had forged the bill under the pressure of great want. It proved to be a reckless and foolhardy, rather than a criminal act. So, at any rate, thought the banker. He therefore pointed out to the youth the danger he had incurred and the mischief that might have arisen to others as well as himself from his rashness,—and then not only destroyed the draft, and with it all proof of his guilt, but seconded his good advice with a present of some money.‡

When establishing the mills at New Lanark in 1783, Dale took every care of his workpeople. He built comfort-

* Chambers, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. v., p. 173; *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxvi., p. 770.

† *Life of Robert Owen, Written by Himself* (London 1857), vol. i. (the only volume published), p. 70.

‡ Chambers, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. v., p. 175.

able dwellings for them, gave them good wages, and promised them constant employment. But the great prejudice then existing among the Lowland Scots against factory work made it difficult for him to get labourers enough. He had to bring from a distance great numbers of Highlanders, and also, following the first Sir Robert Peel's example, to draw from the poor-houses of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and the other large towns all the orphans and pauper children who were found worthy of employment.* That, by itself, was a great boon to Scotland.

'His little kingdom,' said one who visited the establishment in 1797, 'consists of neat, well-built houses, forming broad, regular, and cleanly streets. Near the middle of the town stand the mills, and opposite to them the chief mansion of the place, the residence of the superintendent of the works. The town contains two thousand inhabitants, mostly Highlanders, all of whom that are capable of labour are employed by Mr. Dale in his service, either in working at the cotton manufactory or in repairing or keeping the mills in order. Five hundred children are entirely fed, clothed, and instructed at the expense of this venerable philanthropist. The rest of the children live with their parents in comfortable and neat habitations in the town, and receive weekly wages for their labour. The health and happiness depicted in the countenances of these children show that the proprietor of the Lanark Mills has remembered mercy in the midst of his gain; the regulations adopted here for the preservation of health, both of body and mind, are such as do honour to the goodness and discernment of Mr. Dale, and present a striking contrast to the generality of large manufactories in this kingdom. It is a truth which should be engraven in letters of gold, to the eternal honour of the founders of New Lanark, that, out of nearly three thousand children working in three mills, during a period of twelve years, from 1785 to 1797, only fourteen have died, and not one hath suffered

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxvii., p. 770.

criminal punishment. Pure and fresh air, without which life cannot exist, is administered in abundance in this manufactory, by frequently opening the windows and by air-holes under every other window, which are left open during the summer months. The children are all washed before they go to work, and after they have finished their daily labour, previous to their appearance in the schools. The floors and machinery of the mills are washed once a week with hot water, and the walls and ceilings twice a year are whitewashed with unslaked lime. The children are lodged in large airy rooms. The boys and girls are kept separate from each other during rest, meal times, and working hours. They are fed plentifully with plain and wholesome food, which consists chiefly of fresh beef and barley broth, cheese, potatoes, and barley bread, with now and then some fresh herrings as a variety. Their breakfast and supper is principally oatmeal porridge, with milk in the summer, and in winter a sauce made of beer and molasses. At seven o'clock the children sup; after this there is no nightwork. After supper the schools open, and continue so till nine o'clock. The lesser children, that are not yet old enough to work, are instructed in the daytime: the elder children learn in the evening, when the daily labour is concluded. Proper masters and mistresses are employed to teach both the boys and the girls; the boys learn to read and write and cast accounts; the girls, in addition to these, are taught to work at the needle. Some of the children are taught church music, and on Sunday they all, under the immediate guidance of the masters, attend a place of Divine worship, and the rest of the day is occupied chiefly in receiving moral and religious instruction from these masters.'*

The New Lanark Mills brought to Dale the larger part of his great wealth. But, having no knowledge of the details of cotton manufacture himself, and finding that their management, often their mismanagement, by his half-brother and

* Bristed, *Pedestrian Tour*, extract in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxiv., p. 492.

agent, James Dale, occasioned him much trouble and anxiety, he resolved, in 1799, when he was sixty years of age, to dispose of them. To that step he was further led by a visit from the famous Robert Owen, who, then only eight-and-twenty, had already raised himself from a humble station to a position of affluence as managing partner of the Chorlton Mills, near Manchester.* Owen had visited New Lanark in 1798 at the instigation of Dale's eldest daughter, to whom he

* Robert Owen was born at Newtown, in Montgomeryshire, in 1771. His father was a saddler and ironmonger, and his mother a farmer's daughter. He was sent to school when only four or five years of age, but the master being unable to teach more than reading, writing, and the first four rules of arithmetic, he had, at seven, learnt all that could be taught him, and became assistant usher in the school. When about five years of age he scalded himself so severely with some hot flummery, that from that time his stomach was incapable of digesting any but the most simple food, and that only in very small quantities. "This," he says, "made me attend to the effects of different qualities of food on my changed constitution, and gave me the habit of close observation and continual reflection; and I have always thought that this accident had a great influence in forming my character." Being very 'religiously inclined,' he read the religious books of all parties; and, studying these 'contending faiths,' began to doubt the truth of any of them, on account of the deadly hatred felt by each for all others. When he was ten years old he was sent to London to find employment, and from that time he entirely maintained himself. He was placed in the shop of a draper at Stamford, named McGuffoy, and there learned habits of steady industry and methodical management of business which were of the greatest use in his future life. Employing his leisure hours in reading and endeavouring to find out *the true religion*, he says that he found himself compelled, 'with the greatest reluctance,' to abandon his 'first and deep-rooted impressions in favour of Christianity.' "But," he adds, "my religious feelings were immediately replaced by the spirit of universal charity."

After being three years with Mr. McGuffoy, Owen left his service. After paying a visit to his family in Wales, he found a new situation in the house of Messrs. Kent and Palmer, retail haberdashers, whose shop was on Old London Bridge. There he had very hard and incessant work, and acquired habits of great activity and quickness in business. Then he went to reside with a Mr. Satterfield, in Manchester. While there he met with a man named Jones, who had succeeded in discovering how to make the then new cotton-spinning machines, and who offered to establish a business, in partnership with Owen, if he could find a 100*l.* for capital. This he did; but after some time, finding his partner had no business capacity, he was glad to leave him, bargaining to receive a certain amount of machinery in return for the capital he had invested. He then set up, with part of the promised

was introduced in the course of a business visit to Glasgow. Other visits were quickly paid one after another, partly on business, partly because of the pleasure that he found in meeting with Miss Dale. But in none of them had he the opportunity of introduction to her father. It was more as an excuse for that, and in order thus to forward his love-making, than with serious intent of becoming its purchaser, that he at length sought out the banker and made inquiries about the

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machinery, a small business of his own, having declined a very advantageous offer of a partnership with his former master, Mr. McGuffoy. His business prospered, that being the time when cotton-spinning was just beginning to be very profitable.

At that time Mr. Drinkwater, a rich Manchester manufacturer and foreign merchant, 'had built a mill for fine spinning, and was beginning to fill it with machinery, under the superintendence of Mr. George Lee, a very superior, scientific person in those days. Mr., after Sir George, Philips, was desirous of building a large mill in Salford, and he, unknown to Mr. Drinkwater, formed a partnership with Mr. Lee.' Mr. Drinkwater, being quite ignorant of machinery and cotton-spinning, was greatly non-plussed at being thus abandoned by Mr. Lee, on whose success he had depended entirely in the matter. He advertised for a manager; and Owen, hearing of it, determined to apply for the situation. 'Mr. Drinkwater said immediately, "You are too young. How old are you?"—"Twenty in May, this year," was my reply. "How often do you get drunk in the week?"—"I was never," I said, "drunk in my life." "What salary do you ask?"—"Three hundred a year," was my reply. "What!" Mr. Drinkwater said, with some surprise, repeating the words—"Three hundred a year! I have had, I know not how many, seeking the situation, and I do not think all their askings together would amount to what you require." "I cannot be governed by what others ask," said I; "and I cannot take less. I am now making that sum by my own business." Can you prove that to me?" "Yes; I will show you the business and my books." "Then I will go with you, and let me see them," said Mr. Drinkwater.' The result was that Mr. Drinkwater consented to give what he asked, and to take his machinery at cost price. Mr. Drinkwater knew nothing about the mill, and so the whole of the machinery and the 500 workmen were at once placed under Owen's superintendence; and thus, utterly uninstructed, he undertook the whole concern. "I had to purchase the raw material; to make the machines, for the mill was not nearly filled with machinery; to manufacture the cotton into yarn; to sell it; to keep the accounts; pay the wages; and, in fact, to take the whole responsibility of the first fine cotton-spinning establishment by machinery that had ever been erected." He gave up all his time to examining the machinery minutely, and by silent inspection and superintendence, day by day for six weeks, became

disposal of New Lanark. Dale sent him to make careful inspection of the mills, and then desired him to talk over the matter with his Manchester partners. This was done, and shortly afterwards Robert Owen returned to Glasgow, in the company of John Barton and John Atkinson, members of the Chorlton Company, resolved, if possible, to buy the mills from Dale. 'We inquired the price at which he valued this property,' said Owen. 'He said he was really at a loss to

sufficiently master of the position to give directions in every department. Owen soon began to improve the quality of the manufacture, and to gain universal approbation. Mr. Drinkwater then sent for him, and offered to raise his salary every year for three years, and at the end of that time to take him into partnership with himself and his two sons, and signed an agreement with him on those terms. Owen soon came to be considered one of the best judges of the quality of cotton in the market; and he introduced the American Sea Island cotton, now so extensively imported and grown in the Southern States of North America. He was a member of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, and a friend of Dr. Ditton, and of other celebrated men, Coleridge among the number. At their meetings he was known as "the Reasoning Machine," because, as they said, he 'made man a mere reasoning machine, made to be so by nature and society.' Soon after, Mr. Drinkwater's daughter became engaged to Mr. Samuel Oldknow, one of the greatest muslin manufacturers of the time. He was ambitious of becoming also one of the greatest cotton-spinners, and proposed to enter into partnership with Mr. Drinkwater for this purpose. He wished the business to be kept to the two families, and proposed that Owen should give up his, they giving him a large sum in compensation, and what salary, as manager, he liked to ask for. Owen replied: "Here is the agreement; I now put it in the fire, because I never will connect myself with any parties who are not desirous of being united with me; but under these circumstances I cannot remain your manager, with any salary you can give." Mr. Drinkwater tried in vain to change his resolution, he would only consent to remain until a new manager could be found, which was not until nearly a year afterwards. Owen then made an arrangement for entering into business with two young men, inexperienced in the business, but having capital. "I commenced," he says, "to build the Charlton Mills upon land purchased from Mr. Samuel Marsland and his partners; but while the mills were erecting, a new arrangement was made with those two rich, old-established houses, Messrs. Borrodale and Atkinson, of London, and Messrs. Bartons, of Manchester, with whom and myself a new partnership was formed, under the firm of the Charlton Twist Company, under my management, assisted by Mr. Thomas Atkinson, a brother of one in the firm of Borrodale and Atkinson."—*Life of Robert Owen*, vol i. pp. 1–42.

put a value upon it; his half-brother and Mr. William Kelly managed it for him; and he himself was seldom there, and only for short periods, as his chief business was in Glasgow. "But," he said, "Mr. Owen knows better than I do the value of such property at this period, and I wish that he would name what he would consider a fair price between honest buyers and sellers." 'I was somewhat surprised and nonplussed at this reference to me,' continues Owen, 'with all its responsible consequences, and taking into consideration the position of all parties. My estimate of the establishment, from having taken only a very general inspection of it, was such that I said, "It appears to me that 60,000*l.*, payable at the rate of 3,000*l.* a year, would be an equitable price between both parties." '—"If you think so," answered Dale, "I will accept the proposal, as you have stated it." In that way, in the summer of 1799, was founded the New Lanark Print Company, with Robert Owen for its managing partner.*

In the same year Owen married David Dale's daughter, the old man's original dislike for the young enthusiast soon giving place to strong and lasting admiration. "From my marriage to his death," said Owen, in his autobiography, "he and I never exchanged one unpleasant expression or an unkind word; and this was the more remarkable because our religious notions were very different at the period of my marriage, and we distinctly knew this difference. But Mr. Dale, being sincerely religious, was most charitable to those who differed with him."†

Dale was now growing an old man, and his banking engagements required all the energy he retained. Therefore, at Owen's suggestion, he disposed of the other mills that he had established in various parts of Scotland in 1802.‡ He died on the 17th of March, 1806, in his great house at the corner of Charlotte Street. He left about 100,000*l.*, to be divided among his five daughters, the four younger of whom

* *Life of Robert Owen*, pp., 52, 53. † *Ibid.*, p. 70.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

were consigned to the guardianship of Robert Owen and other relatives.* Twice as much, it was reported, had been applied during his lifetime in ways of benevolence.†

Robert Owen continued for more than twenty years to manage the New Lanark Mills. The management had been fairly commenced more than six years before, in January, 1800. The people over whom Dale himself had had little oversight for some time previous, had already fallen into a disorderly condition. "The great majority of them," said Owen, "were idle, intemperate, dishonest, devoid of truth, and pretenders to religion, which they supposed would cover and erase all their shortcomings and immoral proceedings.‡

Owen set himself to reform them, and establish a model state of society in accordance with the socialist principles for which he is famous. "I had now," he said, "to commence in earnest the great experiment which was to prove to me, by practice, the truth or error of the principles which had been forced on my convictions as everlasting principles of truth, and from which all great and permanent good in practice must proceed. This was to ascertain whether the character of man could be better formed, and society better instructed and governed by falsehood, fraud, force, and fear, keeping him in ignorance and slavery to superstition, or by truth, charity, and love, based on an accurate knowledge of human nature, and by forming all the institutions of society in accordance with that knowledge. It was to ascertain, in fact, whether, by replacing evil conditions by good, man might not be relieved from evil and transformed into an intelligent, rational, and good being; whether the misery in which man had been and was surrounded, from his birth to his death, could be changed

* *Life of Robert Owen*, p. 99.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxvi., p. 771. In person, Dale was short and corpulent. Once he told a friend that he had tumbled on the ice, and "fallen all his length." "Be thankful, sir," was the reply, "that it was not all your breadth."

‡ *Life of Robert Owen*, vol. i., p. 57.

into a life of goodness and happiness by surrounding him through life with good and superior conditions only."*

Proposing thus to establish a model state of society, Robert Owen opened at New Lanark the first infant school in Great Britain, and though he despaired of influencing grown persons as he expected to influence the children whom he trained from the first, he did his best to improve their condition. He was so far successful that visitors from all parts, attracted by the fame of Owen's experiment, declared it the most notable achievement in social science—as it has since come to be called—of modern times. Commercially, also, New Lanark, under Owen's management, was very prosperous. In 1814 some changes were made, and some new partners, the most famous being Jeremy Bentham and William Allen the Quaker, were introduced. It was then arranged that, after five per cent. on the capital had been paid to the shareholders, all further profits should be applied to "the religious, educational, and moral improvement of the workers and of the community at large." Unfortunately differences upon questions of religion and religious duty soon arose between Robert Owen and some of his associates, and Owen, forced to abandon his work at New Lanark, proceeded in a wilder way to develope his communistic plans at Queenwood in Hampshire, before going further to advocate his views in America.†

While the great socialist experiment was being made at the New Lanark Mills, established by David Dale in 1783, the Blantyre Mills, of which he had also been the founder, were being turned to wonderful profit by James Monteith and his sons.

This James Monteith is rightly honoured as the chief promoter of cotton manufacture in Glasgow and its neighbourhood, holding in Lanark a place akin to that of the

* *Life of Robert Owen*, vol. i. pp. 59, 60.

† A very interesting account of Owen's work, to be read with allowances, appears in his autobiography, of which, unfortunately, only the first volume, with a supplementary volume of Appendices, was published.

first Robert Peel in Lancashire. His grandfather, also a James Monteith, was born about 1670 or 1680. He was a farmer of his own little plot of land near Aberfoyle, in Perthshire, and there tried to improve his condition by rearing and selling cattle. But he was too independent for his times. Refusing to pay the black-mail claimed by Rob Roy MacGregor, just then at the height of his predatory success, he became especially obnoxious to the freebooter, and in consequence a raid was made upon Aberfoyle, and all old James Monteith's cattle were driven off. The sturdy farmer was not influential enough to get back his own. He therefore worked hard for some years, and at length succeeded in replacing the stolen cattle by others. These, however, were promptly taken from him by the lawless Highlander, and a third effort at stolid resistance being equally unsuccessful, he is reported to have sunk under his misfortunes and died of a broken heart.* He left one son and three daughters, the latter being severally known to the homely people of the neighbourhood, as 'Jenny wi' the ruffles, Maggie wi' the buckles, and Nannie wi' the cork-heeled shune.'†

In these titles of honour has been found proof of the dignified position of the family in spite of the mischief done to it by Rob Roy. But the old farmer left his affairs in so disastrous a state that his son Henry, born in 1710, was barely able by sale of the property to pay the debts bequeathed to him. Rather than remain a poor man in Aberfoyle, he determined to go south and fight his fortunes in a new way. He was a market-gardener at Anderston, in Glasgow, some years before 1745, when he was a volunteer in one of the two battalions of six hundred men raised by the city for the service of the government in resisting the Pretender's rebellion. With the others of his regiment he fought bravely but unsuccessfully at Falkirk. He was at the final victory of Culloden, and then, his services as a

* *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., pp. 313, 314. † *Ibid.*, p. 314.

soldier being no longer called for, he went back to his work as a market-gardener.* After that we hear no more of him.

James Monteith of Anderston was his only son. Born in 1734, five years before David Dale, he began life, like Dale, as a weaver's apprentice. He liked the business, and soon rose by it to a position of comfort and independence. He became one of the many master weavers collected in Anderston, and known as 'Anderston wee corks,' who, besides manufacturing linen goods with the aid of their apprentices and journeymen, made money by buying up the linen yarns which, a hundred years ago, were spun by hand in nearly every private family. These homespun yarns being woven into cloth, yielded material of which part was often bartered for fresh supplies of yarn, leaving the other part to be sold to strangers at a great profit. Whenever it was desired, the 'wee corks,' instead of buying the yarn from the private spinners, made a charge for weaving and dyeing it, and then sent it back to its original producers. In this sort of trade James Monteith soon became famous. Making money thereby, he prudently used it in procuring from France and Holland finer yarns than were wrought by the homely manufacturers of Scotland, and these he converted into lawns and cambrics as good as the best that could be obtained in any other part of the world. Anxious to do everything in his power to improve the character of his goods, he also joined with some other enterprising manufacturers in inviting forty experienced Frenchwomen to settle in Glasgow and instruct the natives in the best way of spinning and making up the finer sort of yarns.†

James Monteith was not content with being the richest and most influential linen manufacturer of Glasgow. He procured some cotton yarn from India, of the sort used in making East India muslins, and with it produced the first

* *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., pp. 314, 315.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 316–318.

muslin ever manufactured in Scotland. To signalize the event he caused a dress to be made of a part of the material, and embroidered with gold, for presentation to Queen Charlotte.* He did much more than that. From the very commencement of cotton manufacture in Glasgow he interested himself in the subject. He was one of the merchants who, in 1783, invited Arkwright to visit the town; and in 1792 he bought the Blantyre Cotton Mills, which David Dale had established seven years before, in furtherance of the project in which he had embarked in company with Arkwright. Buying them in prosperous times, he paid a good price for them; but he had hardly set to work before the commercial crisis of 1793, following the commencement of revolutionary war in France, caused a stagnation of trade, and threatened Monteith with ruin. He had looked to his profits for funds with which to pay for Blantyre; not having them, he knew not what to do. He begged Dale to annul the sale and take back his mills, but to that proposal Dale, worldly wise for once, would not consent. Therefore Monteith, in spite of his fears, carried on his works, and soon, as it proved, overrode all his difficulties. In about five years he realized a fortune of 80,000*l.*, and in 1805 his Blantyre works alone provided occupation for nine hundred operatives.†

In November of that year Miss Mary Berry, the friend of Horace Walpole, visited Blantyre, and set down in her journal an interesting memoir of her observations. 'Of the nine hundred persons employed about it,' she said, 'about one hundred are artificers of various sorts, smiths, carpenters, &c., &c., to keep the buildings and machinery in repair. The remaining eight hundred are all employed in the various operations of making the cotton ready for the weaver from the rough state in which it comes home in bales. Of these eight hundred, nearly five hundred are children from six to twelve or fourteen years old, and of the remain-

* Pagan, *History of Glasgow*, p. 87.

† *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., pp. 300–302.

ing three hundred there are many more women than men The children are for the most part apprentices, bound to the manufacturer for six or seven years, according to their age, for their food and clothing. After this time is out, they either continue on to receive wages or go to some other business. All these children, as well as all their fellow-labourers, are employed fourteen hours a day, from six o'clock in the morning to eight at night, of which time they are allowed an hour for breakfast, from nine till ten, and an hour for dinner, from two till three; after which, they continue uninterruptedly at work till eight at night. Their forlorn and squalid looks are, God knows, painfully enough impressed on my mind. They have a building where the parish children and such as come to them from a distance are lodged, girls and boys separately; they have porridge of oatmeal at breakfast and supper, and broth and beef for dinner. They have a master to teach them to read and write, which is done after their work is over at night, and they are carried to church of a Sunday. The men and women are in general all at piecework. The carders and reelers—I mean those who attend the carding and reeling (for everything here is done by machinery)—are all women; they earn about ten shillings per week, the spinners from fifteen to sixteen shillings per week; these too are almost all women, and have two children attending the particular machine that each belongs to. The women and girls that are at weekly wages, such as those who tie up and sort the hanks of cotton thread when spun, receive from six to seven shillings per week. The men make from a guinea to two pounds per week. I cannot say that in general the women looked unhealthy; they were for the most part young girls, about and under twenty, and some of them good looking. Some, on the contrary, are objects sadly disfigured by nature. They all work, as in all manufactories, in large lofts, heated by a large tin tube of steam, going the whole length of the room, and giving any required degree of

warmth. I have said that the whole operations here are done by machinery; the whole is moved by one great water-wheel, eighteen feet and twenty-one feet in diameter, which turns several vast iron spindles, communicating motion to all the endless wheels which spin six thousand pounds weight of cotton thread in a week. A fifth part is lost in the manufacture; that is to say, to produce a thousand pounds weight of cotton thread, a fifth part more of the raw material is required. Part of this refuse, however, is not perfectly useless, but is sold to be used up in coarse yarn. The only operation done by the hand is picking the cotton as it comes out of the bale quite clean; after that it is beat, carded, and spun, all by machinery, undergoing six different operations before it is ready to be spun into thread. The various multitude of leather straps upon all the wheels of this immense machinery costs them between 300*l.* and 400*l.* yearly in leather, and the oil and candles consumed in lighting the lofts 400*l.* a year. They are now going to have it lighted by the new contrivance for consuming coal smoke. They likewise at this manufacture dye cotton of a most beautiful colour with madder; they say, such is the demand for it, that they could use twice as much madder as they can get. The cotton yarn undergoes forty different operations before it is made ready to receive the colour. The number of people employed in this great work, together with their wives and children, the place to lodge them, and the persons necessary to feed, clothe, and wash for them, compose a little town—and so it is, in fact, becoming, with a row of houses, two or three shops, &c., &c.,—the only real foundation of towns which the Empress of Russia, with all her greatness, in vain commanded, and Frederick the Second, with all his abilities, in vain coaxed.' * The little town now contains about fourteen hundred inhabitants,

* *Extracts from the Journal and Correspondence of* Miss Berry; edited by Lady Theresa Lewis (London, 1865), vol. ii., pp. 302–305.

upwards of a thousand of them being employed in the Blantyre cotton works.*

* From the same interesting book these notes, supplied to Lady Theresa Lewis by the present proprietors of the factory, are extracted :—

'The numbers at work, in May, 1860, amounted to 1,061; their ages and employment as follows :—

	Males under 18, above 13.		Females under 18, above 13.		Total.
Spinning-mills	27	32	32	169	260
Weaving factory	1	20	41	289	351
Dye Works	18	133	42	201	394
Mechanics and labourers .	1	55	—	—	56
	47	240	115	659	1,061

'The above numbers include only twelve children under thirteen years of age; the employment which required so many of that class in 1805 having been long since discarded. The system of binding apprentices was given up about 1809, and the services of that class expired altogether about 1816 or 1817. While that system continued, it was observed, when terms of service expired, that females generally remained in the factory, working on wages and binding themselves, while the males more generally went forth into the world. This factory appears to be considered a home by all who have been employed in it, for they are free to come and free to go; there is no engagement of any kind on entering; a worker is permitted to leave without giving notice of any kind—he has only to state his wish to the manager, who gives him a line to the clerk to make up his wages, which is paid immediately, and no questions asked. No children are now received from any parish workhouse, school of industry, nor any charitable institution of any kind. The hours of labour are prescribed by the Factory Act, viz. : From 6 a.m. till 9 a.m., 3 hours; from 9¾ a.m. till 2 p.m., 4¼ hours : from 2¾ p.m. till 6 p.m., 3¼ hours : 5 days, at 10½ hours, 52½ hours. Saturday, from 6 a.m. till 9 a.m. 3 hours; from 9½ a.m. till 2 p.m., 4½ hours—7½ hours : making a total for the week of 60 hours. The buildings in which the cotton spinning was carried on in the year 1805 have remained very much as they were, but by this introduction of improved machinery the work in those buildings, as well as keeping the machinery and buildings in repair, is now efficiently carried out by 260 workers, of whom 201 are females and 59 males. The building of four storeys, called the picking-house, which existed in 1805, was destroyed by fire, and has been replaced by one not so high for other purposes, as picking by hand has long been discontinued. The cleaning of cotton is now all done by machinery. The buildings in which the apprentices of former days were lodged, are now converted into warehouse stores, counting house, and an armoury for the rifle-corps. In 1809–10 a large building was added, capable of holding 350 power-looms. A gas-making apparatus was erected in 1814, by which all the works are lighted; and, since 1843, all the dwelling houses in the village, as well as

James Monteith was described, by one who knew him in his later years, as 'a portly gentleman, five feet nine inches high, walking with a slow and rather heavy step, dressed in a neat round hat, powdered hair and long cue, white neck-cloth, Duke of Hamilton striped vest, blue coat and gilt buttons, yellow buckskins, and top boots.'* He left six sons, John, James, Henry, Robert, Adam, and William, all of them concerned in muslin and cotton manufactories in Glasgow and its neighbourhood.

John, the eldest son, we are told, was 'a fine, frank, open-hearted man, full of playfulness and sport, and the life of any jovial company of which he happened to form a part.' He started in business for himself, during his father's life-time, in Saint Andrew's Square. When he founded the concern of John Monteith and Company, Robert Scott Moncrieff, of the Royal Bank, became his partner. 'Moncrieff had, at the outset of life, carried on business for himself on a small scale, and, although he became the manager of the great establishment of the Royal Bank, he could never feel at ease in carrying on a large business with

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the streets, have also been lighted with gas. In 1845 mechanics' shops and stores were erected. A good school-house is kept up, and efficient teachers provided; nearly two-thirds of the expense defrayed by the company, and the remainder by the children in school pence. Parents not connected with the works send their children, that they may participate in the advantages of this school. The children are taken by their parents to whatever church they please. There are two Established churches, two Free churches, one United Presbyterian, within twenty minutes' walk of the village; besides which, the Methodists meet in the village school, and one of the Free Church ministers delivers a sermon every Sabbath in the school-house; and, from five to seven o'clock, the schoolmasters, assisted by the heads of families, and others as monitors, conduct a Sabbath evening school in the school-house, which is attended by 180 to 190 children. About two-thirds of the inhabitants attend the Free and United Presbyterian churches, the remainder are divided betwixt the Established Church, Roman Catholics, and Methodists. The village belonging to the works in 1851 contained a population of 1,280; there are now about 1,400, every available house being occupied; and were there a fourth more houses added, they would be occupied as fast as they could be built.'

* *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., p. 302.

moderate capital. John Monteith, on the contrary, was of an active, ambitious turn of mind, and bent upon pushing his business to the fullest extent possible. Moncrieff was at first very well pleased with the profits from the concern; but by-and-by, when he saw Monteith coming to the bank with great loads of bills for discount, he got alarmed, and remonstrated with him against the business being so far extended. Monteith quieted his scruples by some good-humoured pleasantry, and a promise of attending to his advice; but, instead of following it, he continued to extend the business more and more. Thereupon Moncrieff was so alarmed that he wished to withdraw from the partnership. That was done, and shortly after John Monteith took as partner Patrick Falconer, afterwards of the famous house of Dalglish, Falconer and Company. The firm of the new house then became Monteith and Falconer.'* But John Monteith died childless, and the business passed to other hands. James Monteith, the second son of the old manufacturer of Anderston, to whom fell the management of Blantyre, also left no family. Robert, Adam, and William, the three younger sons, died early, without making much position for themselves as men of business.† The most prosperous and influential of all the

* *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., pp. 319–322. 'At this time,' the narrative continues, 'France had extended her rule to Holland and the banks of the Rhine, so that the trade with Germany was interrupted. Mr. Falconer having a knowledge of French and German, it was proposed that he should go over to Germany, the great fairs offering an opening for the disposal of Glasgow goods. Soon after his arrival in Germany he was arrested by a French guard on suspicion of being an English spy, and carried before the General.' After many questions about Glasgow, the French general, to Mr. Falconer's great surprise, said to him, in good broad Scotch, "But, my frien', do you ken auld James Monteith o' Anderston?" Mr. Falconer replied, "Oo, ay, General, I ken him brawly, for he's my ain pairtner's father." The General then spoke to him in fluent English, and told him he was well acquainted with James Monteith, having lived with him three years when taken by his father to study in Glasgow. He then allowed Mr. Falconer to go quietly on his journey.'

† *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., pp. 319, 324.

brothers, the one to whom descended nearly all the wealth of the family, was Henry, old James Monteith's third son.

This Henry Monteith was born in 1764. In 1785 he was in business for himself as a wholesale weaver in Anderston.* There in 1789 he united with others in reducing the wages of the workmen, who thereupon struck work altogether. Many acts of violence were done; and Henry Monteith, falling once into the hands of a mob, was very roughly used, one of the indignities to which he was subjected being the cutting off of his pigtail.† All through life, however, he was a good friend to his own workmen and to the poor of all classes. To him were mainly due the reforms that were introduced into the Blantyre mills, of which he became in due time chief proprietor, as well as the excellent institutions that were adopted at the splendid works which in 1802 he set up at Barrowfield or Dalmarnock for the manufacture of bandana handkerchiefs.‡

Henry Monteith, having done his full share in the advancement of Glasgow commerce, soon left it in other hands. At some time previous to 1820 he became possessed of Carstairs House, about half-way between Glasgow and Edinburgh, which, from being a stronghold of the fighting Bishops of Glasgow in the middle ages, had descended to his father-in-law, William Fullarton. In 1820 Monteith pulled down most of the old house, and set up in its place a much more splendid structure, lodged on the summit of a

* *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., p. 324.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 35. That was not the only occasion on which he was in bodily trouble. In the same book (vol. ii., p. 109) we are told how, on a West Indian mail-day, towards the close of last century, he was pushing and scrambling with a crowd of other merchants at the little wicket window of the Prince's Street post-office—then the only post-office in Glasgow—when, in the scuffle, he got into a dispute with Robert Watson, the banker. 'From high words they proceeded to fisty-cuffs, and had a fair set to in Prince's Street. So long as the contest was in words, the embryo M.P. had the best of it; but when it came to fighting, the banker won. Thereupon some friends separated them, and they were good friends ever after.'

‡ *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. vi., p. 163.

hill which slopes downwards to the banks of the Clyde.* Here the enterprising merchant amused himself with agricultural enterprise. He was one of the first to adopt the 'frequent drainage system' of Mr. Smith of Deanston.† In all sorts of ways he set himself to increase the welfare of Carstairs and its people. 'Besides affording constant employment to the labouring classes and striving to render their situation comfortable,' it was said, in 1839, 'he takes every opportunity of discountenancing vice and promoting true religion by his personal example.'‡

Monteith entered Parliament as member for the Selkirk Burghs in 1820, Robert Owen being his opponent,§ and Sir Walter Scott one of the chief advocates of his cause. "Selkirk has declared decidedly for Monteith, and his calling and election seem to be sure," wrote Scott to Lord Montague, in February, 1820.‖ Monteith was in Parliament for some years, rarely speaking, but voting steadily on the Tory side, and taking some prominent share in opposition to the measures for Catholic Emancipation and Abolition of the Corn Laws. In spite of their political differences, Sir Robert Peel was his cordial friend to the last. Scott also was his steady friend through life. It was perhaps through this friendship and his consequent acquaintance with the early troubles of the Monteiths at Aberfoyle, that Scott was led to write his novel of *Rob Roy*.

Henry Monteith died in 1848.

* A detailed account of Carstairs is in the *Weekly Register* for January the 14th, 1865.

† *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. vi., p. 557.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 563.

§ *Life of Robert Owen*, vol. i., p. 230.

‖ Lockhart, *Life of Scott*.

CHAPTE XXIII.

SOME MERCHANTS OF LEEDS; ESPECIALLY BENJAMIN GOTT, JOHN MARSHALL, AND MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER.

[1600-1845.]

LEEDS was in existence more than a thousand years before it attained much commercial notoriety. Built on or near the site of an old Roman encampment, it was a fortified town in the days of Bede. Its strength made it a special object of attack at the time of the Norman Conquest, and thereafter, for several generations, the Paganels and their descendants were its feudal lords. Maurice de Gaunt, or Paganel, the last of these, in 1208, gave to its burgesses a charter of freedom, worthily robbing himself of much of his authority in order that the welfare of the town might be promoted.* Then, however, and for some centuries ensuing, Leeds was small and uninfluential; steadily advancing as a market for wool and sheepskins, but inferior to some others of the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire towns to which the Hull and Boston merchants resorted for those staples of trade with the continental cities.

In ancient Leeds there were few elements of prosperity; but as soon as Lancashire and Yorkshire became great fields of manufacturing energy, Leeds was found to be the fittest centre for its eastern half, having Hull for its port, just as Manchester helped on, and was helped by, the commercial advancement of Liverpool. Manchester and Leeds

* WARDELL, *Municipal History of Leeds* (Leeds, 1846), appendix i.

have grown together, taking the places, as great manufacturing resorts, of the older towns of Bristol and Norwich. About contemporary with Humphrey Chetham, the great benefactor of Manchester, was Sir John Saville, who, in 1626, obtained from Charles the First a charter of incorporation for his native town, and was thereupon appointed its first Mayor or Alderman.* Sir John Saville's arms, in which a sheep, the most prominent object, fitly indicated its subsequent prosperity as a seat of woollen manufacture, became the arms of Leeds, and from his time the annals of the town show a notable succession of merchants and manufacturers.

Most famous among them all was excellent John Harrison, who was born in 1579, and died in 1656. His father, also a John Harrison, was a rich merchant before him, so prosperous and wealthy, that the son had little need to earn more money, and wisely spent his fortune in doing all the good that lay in his power. When he was seven years old, it was reported, he saw a poor boy in the streets, without coat or shoes, and, straightway taking off his own coat, threw it over the lad's shoulders.† When he was seventy, and himself if not in actual poverty much poorer than he formerly had been, carping lookers-on declared that he had brought his misfortunes on himself by the reckless ways in which all through life he had shown his charitable disposition.‡

In 1626, Harrison acted as Mayor of Leeds, on behalf of Sir John Saville, and twice afterwards he filled the office in his own name. During his second mayoralty, in 1634, Saint John's Church, begun three years earlier, and built at his own expense, was completed.§ He had already set up a

* Whittaker, *Loidis and Elmete* (Leeds, 1816), p. 272.

† Taylor, *Biographia Leodiensis* (Leeds, 1865), p. 91.

‡ Having bought Rockley Hall, in the Lowerhead Row, soon after inheriting his father's fortune, his first step was to set apart its two largest rooms as storehouses for food and clothing to be given to the poor.—Thoresby, *Ducatus Leodiensis*, edited by Whittaker (Leeds, 1816), p. 27.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

new and much more commodious building for the old Leeds Grammar School, founded seventy years before; and in 1658 he established and endowed, near to Saint John's Church, a hospital for poor widows.* About this time, too, he built himself a house in Briggate,—'a good old-fashioned house, with a quadrangular court in the midst,' says the old historian, who adds, that 'it has one thing very peculiar in it, namely, holes, or passages, cut in the doors or ceilings for the free passage of cats, for which animals he seems to have had as great an affection as another eminent benefactor, Sir Richard Whittington.'†

Other doubtful anecdotes, akin to some other Whittington traditions, are recorded of John Harrison. 'When Charles the First, then in the hands of the Scots, was brought to Leeds,' it is said, 'access to his person was not, of course, easily obtained, but Mr. Harrison desired permission to present his Majesty with a tankard of excellent ale, which he brought in his hand. In this the guards could see no treachery, and they accordingly admitted him; but the King, on opening the lid, found that, instead of the expected beverage, the vessel was filled with broad pieces. These he contrived to hide with great dexterity, and his loyal benefactor was dismissed with more gratitude than thanks.'‡

Honest Harrison could not follow the tide of progress that brought about the Commonwealth, and his last years were made unhappy by the failure of the royalist cause. The defection of many of his old friends was a great grief to him. "The time was when you called me patron, and remembered me in your prayers, public and private," he said, in a letter to the incumbent of Saint John's Church, on which, with its school-house, and associated charities, he had spent at least 6,000*l.*; "but now patrons are out of date, and churches may be tithe barns; to pray for any is Popish and prelatic. The time was when I suffered for you under the royal party

* Thoresby, pp. 83, 55. † *Ibid.*, p. 13.

‡ Whittaker, appendix, p. 2.

more than you will suffer for me under the Parliament; oh, the times! my suffering for you is made the apology deter you from so much as visiting me, being under hatches; a poor conclusion grounded on weak premis The time was when all I could do for you was too little; b now the least done for me is too much."* Posterity, however has remembered John Harrison's good actions, and he is rightly honoured as the foremost of all the benefactors of Leeds.

The greatest boon conferred by Harrison on the commerce of Leeds was his erection, in Kirkgate, of 'a stately cross for convenience of the market.'† Thither assembled, during many subsequent generations, the wool producers and wool-staplers, the clothiers and cloth merchants of Leeds. Among the most famous of them were John and Philip Thoresby, brothers, and both of them aldermen of the borough soon after its incorporation, the eldest of whom was grandfather of Ralph Thoresby, the antiquarian; William Milner, who was Mayor of Leeds in 1697, and father of a William Milner on whom Queen Anne conferred a baronetcy; and several Denisons and Sykeses.

The Sykeses were conspicuous among the merchants of Leeds during more than two centuries. A William Sykes, son of Richard Sykes, of Sykes' Dyke, near Carlisle, settled in Leeds as a clothier in the sixteenth century, and his grandson Richard, wealthy enough to buy the manor of Leeds from the Crown in 1625, was chief alderman of the town for the first eighteen years of its incorporation. Dying in 1645, he left large estates to each of his four sons, and 10,000*l.* to each of his four daughters, from whom four knights' and baronets' families were descended.‡

Another of the family was Daniel Sykes, who was born in 1632, and died in 1693. He was Mayor of Hull, and for many years the greatest merchant therein. He followed the Baltic trade, and it is recorded of him that at one time,

* Whittaker, p. 12. † Thoresby, p. 19. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 3[illegible].

during a grievous famine in Sweden, he freighted several vessels with provisions, and despatched them for gratuitous distribution among the starving people. In return for that noble act, the Swedish Government granted him a lease of iron mines, whence his sons and grandsons drew immense wealth. The house of Joseph Sykes, Son, and Company, for more than thirty years almost monopolised the trade in Swedish iron.*

Joseph, old Daniel Sykes's grandson, was father of another and more famous Daniel Sykes. He was bred a lawyer, and legal pursuits partly occupied him all through life; but the state of his health led him to find in commerce his chief employment, and he also became a famous merchant both in Leeds and in Hull, joining the two callings in an unusual way, and adding to them further work as a zealous politician. For nearly forty years he was Recorder of Hull. He also served it, from 1820 to 1830, as Member of Parliament. In 1830 he was elected by the constituents of Beverley, and he was only prevented by failing health from succeeding Lord Brougham as representative of Yorkshire in 1832. In that year he died, having won the praises of his fellows as a good and honest man, as a wise and generous statesman, and, above all, as a merchant 'thoroughly versed both in the details and in the principles of commerce, attached to the utmost freedom of industry, so independent and disinterested, that he sacrificed the representation of Hull because he would not support the claims of the shipping interests to a re-imposition of the old restrictions on navigation, favourable to freedom of trade in corn and freedom of trade to the East: a cool, clear-headed, patient man of business, and of the most inflexible integrity and unstained purity of character.'†

All these Sykeses were of one stock, with a pedigree plainly

* Thoresby; Taylor, pp. 338, 339.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. cii., part i., pp. 178–181; Taylor, pp. 338–342.

defined. It is not clear whether the many Denisons contemporary with them were all of common parentage or members of several distinct families. Two branches, between whom no kinship can be traced, are specially notable.

One sprang from a William Denison, clothier and merchant, who was in business at North Town End, near the beginning of the eighteenth century. Of his two sons, the younger, Sir Thomas Denison, was a famous lawyer and King's Bench judge: the elder, William, carried on his father's trade. He was very rich, very generous to the poor, and somewhat eccentric. Four times, between 1754 and 1758, he was elected Mayor of Leeds, but refused to enter upon the duties of the office, so that fresh Mayors had to be chosen. In the last year the insulted corporation brought an action against him for this persistent rejection of their profferred honour, and he at length agreed to take the title of Mayor on condition that all the business should be done by his brother. In 1779 he was High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, in which county he had some time before bought the manor of Ossington. That estate, with half a million of money, he left to his eldest son, John, who greatly increased the fund before making room for another John. John Denison, the younger, was Member of Parliament for Chichester, and afterwards for Malton. A daughter of his first wife married Charles Manners Sutton, Speaker of the House of Commons, and afterwards Lord Canterbury. Through a second wife he had several sons, one of them the Bishop of Salisbury, who died in 1854; another, the present Governor-General of Madras, while the eldest has been Speaker of the House of Commons since 1857.*

Another of the Denisons, named Joseph, was born at Leeds in 1726. His parents were too poor, it is said, to be able to teach him even to read. But he managed to scrape together a little knowledge by his own energy, and then he applied that energy to the making of a great fortune. He

* Taylor, pp. 169, 180, 181.

ran away from Leeds to London, just in time to obtain a situation in the counting-house of John Dillon of Saint Mary Axe. By some means or other he soon acquired a partnership, and then sole possession of the business, his old master at last becoming his clerk. 'By unabated industry and the most rigid frugality, he worked himself,' we are told, 'into very high credit and an increasing fortune.' He was about fifty when, in 1775, the Heywoods of Liverpool established their bank and found it expedient to employ him as their London agent. Here, again, he steadily pushed himself into the topmost place, bequeathing, in 1806, the senior partnership in the house of Denison, Heywood, and Company, besides more than a million in lands or money, to his son, William Joseph Denison, many years Member of Parliament for Surrey, Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1808, and uncle of the first Lord Londesborough. When he died he was worth between two and three million pounds.*

Most of the money-making Denisons left Leeds to spend or hoard their wealth elsewhere. The true merchant-patriots of a town are those who use the influence that it brings them for its own advancement; and such pre-eminently were Benjamin Gott and John Marshall, the greatest merchants of Leeds during the last twenty years of the eighteenth century and the first twenty of the nineteenth. Their lives were very nearly contemporaneous, and they were associates in many good and charitable works; but in business matters they held different courses. The one gave new life to the old woollen trade of the town; the other brought to it another staple source of wealth, by making it a great centre of linen manufacture.

All the early prosperity of Leeds, as we have already observed, sprang from its trade in woollen goods; yet in the middle of the seventeenth century, shortly before the birth of Benjamin Gott, this trade was still in its infancy. Leeds itself was, in comparison with its present condition, an insig-

* Taylor, pp. 228-232.

nificant town, hardly longer than the length of Briggate, stretching westward no further than Trinity Church, and with Saint Peter's Church for almost its eastern limit. Saint John's Church, with the Free Grammar School and Harrison's Almshouses adjoining, formed its modern boundary; and all the town was contained on the northern side of the Aire. The old Norman bridge at the foot of Briggate still sufficed for the weekly cloth-market; the traders of the town and the country manufacturers being called together by a bell rung in the quaint bridge-chapel, and the merchants of Hull, Boston, and similar places coming there to buy the cloths and carry them away in river-boats.

By 1758, however, the trade had outgrown that old-fashioned mart, and, accordingly, a commodious building, now known as the Mixed Cloth Hall, was set up a little to the west of Trinity Church. This structure, thought preposterously large at the time of its erection, formed a quadrangle three hundred and sixty-four feet long, and a hundred and ninety-two feet broad, with an inner court measuring three hundred and thirty feet by ninety-six. It was accessible by seven doors, was lighted by a hundred and sixty-seven windows, and was large enough, it was reckoned, to hold 100,200*l.*'s worth of cloth at a time. Within seventeen years from its opening, it was found necessary to build another meeting-place. The White Cloth Hall, between Briggate and Saint Peter's Church, was completed in 1775; and within a few years, nine similar structures were opened in all the trading towns of the West Riding of Yorkshire. All grew with the growth of Leeds. In 1775, Leeds contained 17,117 inhabitants. By 1801 the population had increased to 30,699; in 1821 it amounted to 83,746; and in 1865 it was estimated at 224,025.

One of the causes of that rapid growth was the opening of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, begun in 1767, and steadily but slowly continued down to its completion in 1816. As early as 1774, however, twenty miles of the

canal, extending from Bingley to Bradford, were ready for use, and presented, according to the judgment of contemporaries, 'the noblest works of the kind that perhaps are to be found in the universe, namely, a five-fold, a three-fold, a two-fold, and a single lock, making together a fall of a hundred and twenty feet, a large aqueduct-bridge, of seven arches, over the river Aire, and an aqueduct on a large embankment over Shipley Valley.'* There certainly was need of improvement in the ways of traffic. Down to 1753, the best roads between Leeds and the neighbouring towns were narrow lanes, with just room enough for the old-fashioned waggons that were used for burdens too heavy to be conveyed in the usual way, on the backs of single horses. On these pack-horses the raw wool and roughly-made cloths were generally carried by the small dealers, who rode in front of their goods. It was slow travelling at best, rendered very dangerous by the bad state of the dark and cheerless roads and the constant risk of attack by highwaymen.†

Most of the wool was made into cloth by small manufacturers scattered about the country, and lodged in the different towns and villages of the West Riding. These manufacturers brought or sent their goods to the markets of such places as Leeds, Bradford, or Wakefield, there either to be sold at once to the wholesale merchants, who came from other parts of England or from foreign countries, or to be collected by the wool-staplers and reserved for subsequent distribution. There were no manufactures conducted on the extensive scale now common, and necessary to the more finished workmanship of modern times, until Benjamin Gott set the fashion.

This good man was born on the 24th of June, 1762, at Leeds, where his father, contemporary with Brindley, and, like him, originally a common working man, rose to some

* *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, cited by SMILES, *Lives of the Engineers*, vol. i., p. 456.

† WHITTAKER, p. 80.

distinction as a civil engineer. The son was put to school at Bingley, and then placed as a clerk in the house of Wormald and Fountain, who carried on a respectable trade as wool-dealers and manufacturers of the sort then common in Leeds. Showing aptitude for the business, he was soon taken into partnership by his employers, and upon their death or retirement he became sole master of the establishment.* His energy, prudence, and reasonable philanthropy, soon made it the largest of the kind in Leeds, and insured for him so much prosperity that in due time he came to be the recognized head of the woollen trade in Yorkshire.

From first to last he aimed, above all things, at preserving the independence of the small dealers and manufacturers. Full of sympathy for the great body of the people, he watched with jealous eye the development of huge factories like those of the Peels, at Bury and Tamworth, and the Monteiths, at Blantyre and Dalmarnock. He saw that this was an inevitable tendency of modern commerce; he yielded to it himself, and became proprietor of a monster factory of his own; but he felt that this growth of trade, if, on the one hand, it was very helpful to the lower classes, was likely, on the other, to inflict upon them a serious injury. He considered that the men who were only fit to be the servants of others could not possibly be hurt, would very likely be benefited, by having employment in large, instead of small establishments. But he was very loth to damage the position of the multitudes of insignificant manufacturers who honourably preferred to be their own masters and to follow the calling inherited from their fathers, only aided by their own sons and daughters, or perhaps by one or two apprentices, who hoped in time to be also independent cloth-makers. With all such men Benjamin Gott was anxious to trade after their own fashion. He sought them out, bought their produce from them on equitable terms, made every allowance for any defects in its character that were due to the incompleteness

* Taylor, p. 377.

of the machinery with which they were forced to be content, and encouraged them to go on in their old ways, only adapting those ways to the demands of modern commerce for cheap and well-made goods.

With that excellent purpose he did his utmost to carry on the smaller sorts of business that had characterised his house when he first became a partner in it. He was not, however, content with that. Reasonably mindful of his own interests, as well as with the view of promoting the welfare of his town and trade, he also became a manufacturer on a large scale. His factory at Armley was, towards the end of the eighteenth century, so extensive that his workmen's wages amounted to 1,000*l.* a week—a small sum in the eyes of many great manufacturers of the present day, but very large indeed if taken as a measure of the extent of an employer's business seventy years ago.*

* In 1841, Mr. William Chambers visited the establishment of Messrs. Gott and Sons, and penned this account of his visit:—'To observe the first step in the operation, we were conducted from the ground level to the summit of one of the large structures, by means of a scaffold, which is pulled up a kind of well in the building. On opening a door below, we see a low table before us; and stepping upon it, and pulling a rope to set the machinery in motion, we are immediately carried upwards with great steadiness. The table may be stopped at any floor in passing, and it is lowered with equal facility. Steam-power is of course the mover of this, as well as of all the other mechanical contrivances in the house. By means, therefore, of this stair-saving process, which is now common in all large factories, we were speedily landed on the uppermost floor, and there followed the wool in all its subsequent stages—dyeing, spinning, weaving by power-loom, fulling, dressing, clipping of surface, drying, pressing, and packing. Steam is employed throughout; it boils the great tin cauldrons in which the dyeing is effected, lifts the enormous mallets which are employed in fulling, turns the cylinders to which the teasles are applied for raising the nap, dries the cloth on tenter-racks—fixed tier above tier from bottom to top of a building, works the hydraulic presses, packs the bales, and, in short, is the universal agent of power and heat; on every hand saving labour, time, and expense, and, therefore, giving the manufacturer that economical command of means which places him at such advantage over less favoured competitors. As many as eleven hundred persons have been employed at one time in this large concern; but trade being at present in a depressed state in Leeds—much to the distress of the operatives as well as the proprietors—no more than about seven hundred are employed. Even

At that time wool and worsted were worked exclusively by hand; neither Hargreaves' jenny nor Crompton's mule, nor any of the other inventions that had already caused wonderful improvement in cotton manufacture, having been as yet adapted to woollen fibre. The wool was first sorted, and then combed or carded by the manual labour of men and boys, whose average wages amounted to about twelve shillings a week; then it was spun, generally by women and girls, whose wages varied from eighteen pence to half-a-crown a week. It was finally submitted to the hand-loom weaver, who, by hard work, could rarely earn more than ten shillings a week. In 1858 the average wages of the men employed in the Leeds woollen factories amounted to twenty-two shillings a week, while boys received about six and eightpence, and women and girls more or less than eight shillings. Thus the labourers' rate of pay has been more than doubled, notwithstanding the very great reduction in the price of the goods produced by them, through the intro-

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Even this, however, is a large number; and a stranger would naturally expect to observe some degree of confusion and slovenliness where so many workmen were brought into close contact, but he would be pleasingly disappointed. Two stupendous steam-engines, the prime movers of the works, are individually lodged in private apartments as clean and well-painted as a gentleman's drawing-room, and all parts shine with the most brilliant polish. Throughout the different large buildings containing the workmen, you do not hear a word spoken. Every individual is as busy as a bee at his own peculiar work; no such thing as straggling out and in is observable, and the whole system seems perfect in point of concentrated industry and organization. The raw material employed is in a great measure the fine Saxony wool, and the purchase and importation of this article forms one of the principal professions in the district. An attempt was at one time made on the part of the wool-growers of Burton to exclude Saxony wool from our markets; but it was successfully shown by Mr. Gott, and other gentlemen, in their evidence before Parliament, that if it were done, the ruin of the British wool-trade would follow, for it was only by the use and admixture of Saxony wool that our manufacturers could compete with continental fabrics. By pursuing the enlightened recommendations of these gentlemen, and admitting Saxony wool, the producers of wool in our own country at all times command a ready and profitable market among the wool-staplers of England.'—*Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, vol. x., p. 353.

duction of machinery into the woollen manufactures, begun by Gott and his associates, and greatly extended in recent years by younger men, like David Cooper. In 1856, the Leeds clothing district, engrossing about half the woollen trade of Yorkshire, and more than a fourth of that of all Great Britain, was occupied by 340 manufacturers, who gave employment to 23,328 operatives, besides using 1,005 gigs, 2,344 power-looms, and 423,482 spindles worked by steam-power equal to the force of 7,810 horses.*

And while the woollen trade has been thus progressing in Leeds, under the encouragement of men like Benjamin Gott, the town has become the home of another wealth-producing branch of commerce, with John Marshall for its foster-father.

There had been a linen trade in Leeds, as in every other part of England, from time immemorial. Long before woollen fabrics came into general use, it was the fashion for country people to grow, or barter, a little flax, and therewith to make rough clothing for themselves and those belonging to them. There was a guild of linen-weavers in London in the fourteenth century, and every important town had a similar association during the middle ages. But the trade was slow in making progress as a trade. Long after England had grown famous for its woollen manufactures, the making of linen clothing was left chiefly in the hands of country folks and the daughters of the household, their coarser wares being found good enough for ordinary use, while the better sorts were imported from France and Holland.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, however, a great change began. In 1663 a law was passed for the encouragement of linen manufacture in England, and, without the aid of laws, the trade was readily prosecuted in various parts of Scotland. About 1670, moreover, some Scots, resident in the north of Ireland, started the manufacture in Belfast and the neighbourhood, where for many centuries flax had been freely grown, but only for exporta-

* Baines, *The Woollen Manufacture of England.*

tion or domestic use. 'No women are abler to spin linen thread well,' said Sir William Temple, in 1680, 'than the Irish, who, labouring little in any kind with their hands, have their fingers more supple and soft than any other women of the poor condition among us. And this may certainly be improved into a great manufacture of linen, so as to bear down the trade both of France and Holland, and draw much of the money which goes from England to those parts upon this occasion into the hands of his Majesty's subjects of Ireland, without crossing any interest of trade in England.' Successive generations of statesmen were of that opinion, and in all sorts of ways the linen trade was encouraged in Ireland, much good to the country being done thereby in spite of the consequent injury to the older business in woollen goods. By the year 1760, Belfast, Newry, Drogheda, Londonderry, Dundalk, and Dublin, had come to have a thriving trade in linen, most of which was shipped to Liverpool, for distribution in various parts of England. In Scotland, also, the trade made rapid progress, Glasgow being its head-quarters, and other towns, like Kirkaldy and Dundee, being set by it on the highway to prosperity. In the first half of the eighteenth century, 'linen being everywhere made at home,' according to contemporary report, 'the spinning executed by the servants during the long winter evenings, and the weaving by the village webster, there was a general abundance of napery and under-clothing. Every woman made her web and bleached it herself, and the price never rose higher than two shillings a yard, and with this cloth nearly every one was clothed. The young men, who were at this time growing more nice, got linens from Holland for shirts, but the old ones were satisfied with necks and sleeves of the fine, which were put on loose above the country cloth.'* In those days the handsomest ball-dresses

* Cited by WARDEN, *The Linen Trade, Ancient and Modern* (Dundee, 1864), p. 423. To this interesting book I am indebted for some other help in the writing of the above paragraph.

were made of linen, and in country places the wealthiest ladies thought it no disgrace to busy themselves with the spinning wheel.

This same spinning wheel was used alike in the cottages of the poor and in the largest manufactories then established. In 1741 a mill was set up at Birmingham on the principle of the roller-spinner invented by Lewis Paul in 1738, and there for a little while it was turned by a couple of donkeys, while two girls were employed in working off the yarn thus produced. But nothing noticeable was done before the year 1787. Then John Kendrew, an optician, and Thomas Porthouse, a clockmaker, of Darlington, made public an invention that was destined to effect an entire revolution in the linen manufacture. The speciality of their invention was 'a cylinder three feet in diameter by ten inches broad, smooth on the surface, with some small cylinders on rollers in connection, for holding and drawing the flax or other fibrous materials put upon it for operation.'* This machine was first put to use at a little mill set up on the Sperne by Kendrew and Porthouse, and it was soon adopted in various parts of the kingdom, Darlington being made by it, for a little while, a famous resort of linen manufacturers. Thither James Aytoun went from Manchester, in 1792, to make careful study of the machine and introduce important improvements in it, before going to Kirkaldy to spend nearly seventy years in forwarding the trade in which, perhaps, he was the most prominent man of all. Thither also went John Marshall from Leeds, to receive suggestions which he was to turn very notably to the advancement both of Leeds and of himself.

Marshall was born at Leeds on the 27th of July, 1765, three years after Gott. His grandfather, John Marshall, of Yeadon Low Hall, near Leeds, had been a man of some substance;† but his father, William Marshall, was a shop-

* Brown, *Reminiscenses of Flax Spinning* (Dundee, 1862).

† Burke, *Dictionary of the Landed Gentry.*

keeper in Briggate.* John Marshall was soon tired of his prospects as a shopkeeper's assistant. He was eighteen when Kendrew and Porthouse produced their flax-spinning machine. It is not clear whether he was thereby influenced in his choice of a business or whether his course had already been marked out. At any rate he lost no time in proceeding to Darlington, there mastering the intricacies—such as they were—of the machine, and returning to his own town, to put it into use at Scotland Mill, near Meanwood, which, in 1788, he built a few miles out of Leeds, in partnership with Samuel Fenton, of Leeds, and Ralph Deartone, of Knaresborough.† There he spent all his energies and all his money in various experiments, doing all he could towards improving the Darlington spinning-machine as well as towards making serviceable the other instruments necessary for the production of linen. That he did considerable business is proved by the fact that his debt to Kendrew and Porthouse, to whom he had agreed to pay a royalty for each spindle that he employed, rose in a few years' time to 900*l.* He made no profits, however, during these first years, and declared himself unable to meet the claim. He also contested it on the ground that the many improvements adopted by him made his machinery so different from that of the Darlington inventors that he had really ceased to make use of their patent rights.‡

Of those improvements Matthew Murray was the chief author. Born at Newcastle in 1765, Murray had been working as an engine-smith at Stockton-on-Tees, when in 1789 he determined to go and try his fortune in Leeds. He offered his services to John Marshall, and was so successful in the first job on which he was employed, that he was permanently engaged by him. By the end of 1789,

* *Leeds Mercury*, June 14, 1845.

† Longstaffe, *History and Antiquities of Darlington* (Darlington, 1854), pp. 311, 312; Fairbairn, *Treatise on Mills and Mill-Work* (London, 1865), part ii., p. 197.

‡ Longstaffe, p. 312.

before he had been a year at his new work, he had suggested so many useful changes that his master made him a present of 20*l.*, and he was promoted to the management of the little workshop at Scotland Mill. He continued for six years in Marshall's establishment, by his ready wit and steady perseverance helping his employer through all his mechanical difficulties, and enabling him, in due time, to become the most successful flax-spinner in the world. In 1795 he left John Marshall to enter into partnership with James Fenton and David Wood, older and richer men than himself, in establishing engine-building and machine-making shops at Holbeck, then a village, now a part of Leeds. Making all sorts of other tools, he continued to give special attention to the tools required in linen manufacture.* 'But for his improvements,' says his son-in-law, 'it is nearly certain that flax-spinning in the neighbourhood of Leeds would have ceased to exist, as all those embarked in it had lost the greater part of their capital without any success. At his commencement mill-gearing was in a very rude state; he left it in nearly its present condition.'†

Some time before Murray's independent settlement in Holbeck, John Marshall had gone thither. In 1791 he established, in Water Lane, the mill which, with later additions, is still the chief seat of the flax-spinning business conducted by his successors.‡ Three mills now occupy the ground, one of them being unique in manufacturing architecture. The building, unlike almost all other large factories, is only one storey in height. One room comprises the whole. About four hundred feet long and more than two hundred broad, it covers nearly two acres of ground. It is nine times as large as Birmingham Town Hall, seven times as large as Exeter Hall in London. 'The room is some twenty

* Smiles, *Industrial Biography*, pp. 260-264; Taylor, pp. 298-302, where some corrections of Mr. Smiles's account are made by Mr. J. O. March, Murray's son-in-law and successor in the business.

† Taylor, pp. 299, 301.

‡ Fairbairn, part ii., p. 197.

feet high and supported by about twenty pillars. The spaces between the pillars allow the roof to be partitioned off into a series of flattish domes, or groined arches, sixty or seventy in number; and in the centre of each dome is a lofty conical skylight, of such large size that the whole series together contain ten thousand square feet of glass. Upwards of a thousand persons, mostly females, are employed in this room alone. In one part of it the flax-drawing operations are carried on; in another the roving, in another the spinning.' This room is not the only marvel. The roof is a green field, we are told; the wood-work being thickly covered with plaster and asphalte, and that with a stratum of earth, which protects the asphalte from the heat of the sun.*

John Marshall also built a great linen-thread manufactory at Shrewsbury. But his chief business was in Leeds, and there his mills were, and still are, larger than those of

* *The Land we Live in* (London, no date), vol. iii., pp. 31, 32. *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, vol. x., p. 353. This is Mr. Chambers' account of the factory in 1841:—'The mill of Messrs. Marshall is probably the largest in the kingdom. Consisting of several large brick edifices and out-houses, some high and some low, it more resembles a town than a single establishment, and at present gives employment to about fifteen hundred individuals, many of whom are children of both sexes. By the usual contrivance of the moving table or scaffold, we were conducted in an easy manner to the top of one of the large buildings, and introduced to the first operation in the process, that of breaking handfuls of flax into three pieces or lengths, and sorting them according to qualities. The lower part of the filament is the coarsest, the next coarsest is at the top, and the finest is in the middle. It being necessary to separate these qualities, but without cutting, the division is effected by causing an apparatus to break or tear each handful into three parts. The apparatus, which seems a complex combination of wheels and rollers, is exceedingly elegant, being all made of polished iron and brass, and it effects its purpose with great nicety and rapidity. A host of youngsters were employed on several floors in superintending this kind of machine, as also machines for dressing and smoothing the rolls of lint, previous to their being carried to the spinning apparatus. The material finally appears in the form of twist, ready for weaving, or in thread prepared for the sempstress. The putting of the thread on reels or small bobbins, such as we see for sale in shops, is a remarkably neat operation. It is done by girls, with the aid of an ingeniously-contrived spindle, and finger apparatus to guide the thread in even layers, and the filling of a bobbin is the work of only a few seconds.'

any of the other manufacturers whom his success has led to embark in the trade. In 1821 there were in Leeds and its neighbourhood nineteen mills, having in all 700 horse-power, and containing 36,000 spindles. Four out of the nineteen were Marshall's. In 1831 the number of mills had been increased by five; and in 1838 it had grown to forty, employment being thereby given to 2,027 men and 4,303 women. In 1846 there were in Leeds thirty-seven separate establishments, giving work to 140 power-looms, 198,076 spindles, and 9,458 men and women, all the other linen factories of Yorkshire having only about half that strength.*

This rapid growth of linen manufacture in Leeds has led, of course, to much commerce with other parts of England and with foreign countries. Besides encouraging manufacturers to settle in Leeds, John Marshall's prosperity brought to the town many influential merchants. Of these the worthiest, though not the richest, was Michael Thomas Sadler. Fifteen years younger than Marshall, he was born at Snelstone, in Derbyshire, on the 3rd of January, 1780. In a comfortable house, and by estimable parents, he was carefully educated, with the intention that he should be a lawyer. In the year 1800, however, when he was about twenty, he was sent to Leeds, where his elder brother, Benjamin, had already been established in the flax trade. The brothers worked successfully for ten years, and then entered into partnership with the widow of Samuel Fenton, the same who had been Marshall's associate at Scotland Mill twenty years before, and who had also for a long time—long before Leeds had any linen goods of its own to sell—been the principal importer of Irish linens for sale in Yorkshire. Thenceforward the house of Sadler, Fenton, and Company, carried on a thriving trade, both in raw flax and in linen goods, having places of business in Leeds and in Belfast, and doing good service to both districts by promoting an

* Warden, p. 384.

interchange of commodities between Yorkshire and the north of Ireland.*

But Michael Thomas Sadler was not himself much of a merchant. During the first few years of his residence in Leeds he found relief from the monotony of the counting-house in literary and other pursuits. He was a hard reader, a close scholar, and a diligent writer. He produced a metrical version of the *Psalms*, wrote an epic poem and shorter pieces, and contributed numerous articles to the *Leeds Intelligencer*, then the leading Tory newspaper in the north of England. He was captain of a company of Leeds volunteers. He was also, during many years, the indefatigable superintendent of a large Sunday school, and all through life an active sharer in all sorts of religious and philanthropic works, having therein congenial fellowship with William Hey, the benevolent and learned surgeon of Leeds, the friend of Wilberforce and other leaders of the anti-slavery party.

Gott and Marshall, also, though too full of their commercial duties to give to it very much of their time, were zealous promoters of philanthropic work in Leeds. Both of them were associated with Sadler and Hey in the foundation of the Leeds Philosophical Society in 1818. In November of that year, at a meeting held in the Court House, under the presidency of William Hey, it was decided to establish a society for the advancement of 'all the branches of natural knowledge and literature, but excluding all topics of religion, politics, and ethics.' On the 9th of November, 1819, the foundation stone of the Philosophical Hall was laid by Benjamin Gott; and on the 6th of April, 1821, it was formally opened, the total cost of the building, about 6,000*l.*, being defrayed by subscriptions, in which Gott and Marshall took the lead. Both men were active in helping on the society by all possible means. Gott gave to it fossils, books, and

* *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Michael Thomas Sadler* (London, 1842), pp. 2–11.

the like. Marshall, besides various donations, aided it by several lectures. One, delivered in 1819, during the Society's temporary lodgement in the Court House, was on 'the relative happiness of cultivated society and savage life.' In 1821 he lectured on 'geology;' in 1824, 'on the production of wealth, and on the propriety of discussing subjects of political economy as distinguished from politics;' in 1826, 'on the present state of education in England as a preparation for active life.' These titles indicate the bent of the lecturer's mind. Other lectures were from time to time delivered by Michael Thomas Sadler, in common with most of the other leaders of society in Leeds forty years ago.*

The Philosophical Society being especially designed, and therein succeeding admirably, for the encouragement of studious thought among the more well-to-do inhabitants of the town, it was quickly followed, apparently in 1824, by the Leeds Mechanics' Institute, adapted for a different class of members. Gott was its first president, Marshall its first vice-president; and both were liberal donors to its funds.

Marshall was also a foremost patron of the Lancasterian School established in Leeds. He organized good schools for the children of his own workpeople; and among various other measures for the instruction of those workpeople, he published a volume on *The Economy of Social Life*, repeating cleverly and clearly, in a form adapted to the understanding of factory operatives, the leading principles of political economy as they were then established. He was one of the founders of the London University in 1825, and served for many years on its council. In 1826 his zeal for the advancement of education led him to urge the establishment of a similar institution in Leeds, for the benefit of the inhabitants of the north of England.†

Generally agreeing on matters of philanthropy, the great

* The above details are gleaned from the records of the Philosophical Society, for access to which I am indebted to its Curator.

† TAYLOR, pp. 412, 413.

merchants of Leeds differed widely on political questions. Marshall was a hearty Whig, both from his own convictions and by family ties, his eldest daughter being the second wife of Lord Monteagle, and two of his sons being married to daughters of the same nobleman. Gott and Sadler were as zealous on the Tory side. Gott, always shunning noise and turmoil, took little public part in politics. Sadler was a stout and bustling Tory from first to last. Having made himself famous throughout England as an opponent of Roman Catholic Emancipation, he went in 1829 to continue his opposition in Parliament as Member for Newark-upon-Trent. Before that, in 1826, Marshall had been chosen, along with Lord Milton, to represent the Liberals of Yorkshire. In 1830 he declared himself too old for re-election, but he was an eager champion, in his own neighbourhood, of the great Reform movement of 1831; and in 1832, on the first election of Members of Parliament for Leeds, his son, John Marshall the younger, who died in 1836, was chosen, in company with Thomas Babington Macaulay, the unsuccessful Tory candidate being Michael Thomas Sadler.

Sadler had ceased, long before that time, to have any personal share in the commerce of Leeds, or even in the philanthropic movements of the town. Residing generally in Belfast or London, he devoted himself to political topics and general questions of social philosophy. A fierce opponent of the Reform Bill, he seconded the motion of General Gascoigne, in 1831, which led to the dissolution of the House of Commons, and the consequent excitement in every quarter of England. He was also, to the last, a persistent enemy of Catholic Emancipation; and he was no less steady and eloquent in his opposition to every measure in favour of Free Trade. Specially interesting himself on behalf of Ireland, he sought to establish a law for the allotment of land to all the deserving poor, and that measure he further advocated, with the rich and varied eloquence that characterised all his speeches and writings, in a treatise on *Ireland, its Evils,*

and their Remedies. He it was, too, who produced the famous Ten Hour Bill, for the protection of children employed in factories. He published his opinions on that subject in a book on *The Factory System*, and in another work, on *The Law of Population*, he undertook to controvert the teachings of Malthus.* While writing a supplement to that work, he died at Belfast, on the 29th of July, 1836, only five and fifty years of age.

Gott and Marshall, though his seniors, both survived him. Gott, after many years of peaceful retirement, in the splendid house that he had adapted to his literary and artistic tastes at Armley—years enlivened by pleasant intercourse with friends like Rennie, Watt, and Chantrey, and hallowed by many noble acts of charity—died on the 14th of February, 1840, in his seventy-eighth year. Marshall was very nearly eighty when he died, on the 6th of June, 1845, at Hallsteads, an estate on the banks of Ullswater, whither he had gone to pass most of his closing years.

* An elaborate exposition of his various opinions is in the *Memoirs of Sadler*, to which I am indebted for all the facts introduced in the above brief sketch of his life.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BARINGS, AND NATHAN MEYER ROTHSCHILD, OF LONDON.

[1736–1848]

THE Great Revolution, in bringing a German prince to guide the course of English liberties, led to the coming over of a crowd of Germans who, as merchants and manufacturers, bankers, and stock-brokers, helped on a revolution, almost as notable, in the character of English commerce. Of these the Barings were the most famous of all. Francis Baring—the son or grandson of Peter Baring, who, about the middle of the seventeenth century, was living at Gröningen, in the Dutch province of Overyssel—was a Lutheran minister at Bremen, until the accession of William of Orange to the English throne opened the way for him to greater influence as pastor of a Lutheran church in London. John Baring, his son, was founder of the commercial house, now famous in every quarter of the world. Using the experience that he seems to have acquired in the factories of the Continent, he set up a cloth manufactory at Larkbeer, in Devonshire. Making money there, he came to increase it in London; at first, merely sending his cloths to the American colonies, and thence procuring in exchange such articles as he could be sure of selling to advantage in England. By strict honesty and close business habits, we are told, he won the esteem of merchants much greater than himself. They helped him on

in his business, and before his death he too was a merchant of wealth and eminence.*

Of his four sons, Francis, the third, born in 1736, was the most notable. Carefully trained during childhood under his father's own supervision, he was in due time put to school with a Mr. Coleman, author of several mathematical treatises of some note in their day. Mr. Coleman's arithmetic was not wasted on young Francis Baring. From him, it is recorded, the lad 'acquired the talent for which he was most distinguished; for in calculations made on the spot, admitting of no previous study, he was certainly considered as unequalled.' It is not clear whether, on leaving school, he went at once into his father's office or first served a sort of apprenticeship in the great house of Bochm. While yet a young man he became a merchant on his own account. At first, from the time of his father's death, he, and his eldest brother John, were in partnership, pushing the interest of the Larkbeer cloth factory, buying, wherever they could be bought most cheaply, the wool, dye-stuffs, and other raw material required for its operations, and finding a market for the cloths when they were made, besides engaging in various other sorts of mercantile enterprise. Before long, John Baring retired from trade and went to enjoy his wealth at Mount Radford, near Exeter. Francis Baring carried on the business on a vastly extended scale. Having married an heiress in 1766, he became an East India proprietor, a holder of bank stock, and a great dealer in funds and shares.†

That was a trade which, though by no means new in Francis Baring's day, was just then acquiring new dignity and importance, partly through the honesty and enterprise of Benjamin and Abraham Goldsmid.‡ They were sons of

* Vincent Nolte, *Fifty Years in Both Hemispheres, or Reminiscences of a Merchant's Life* (London, 1854), p. 157; *Public Characters of* 1805 (London, 1805), p. 51.

† *Annual Register*, vol. lii., pp. 399, 400; *Public Characters of* 1805, pp. 31–33; *Gentleman's Magazine*.

‡ The representative stock-jobber of the generation preceding that of

Aaron Goldsmid, a Jew, who came from Hamburg about the middle of the eighteenth century, and settled as a merchant

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Baring and the Goldsmids, was Samson Gideon, the son of a West India merchant, who was born early in the eighteenth century. His schooling was in that South Sea scheme, and the hundred other financial bubbles attendant on it, which so grievously affected English commerce and the happiness of all classes of English people in 1720 and the following years. Robert Walpole's friend, he began, as a young man, to enrich himself by help of the lotteries and other stock-jobbing appliances which Walpole and nearly every other statesman of those times encouraged. But he seems to have done it honestly. His first great accession of wealth came in 1745, the year of the Pretender's rebellion. During the panic caused by the report that an insurgent army was marching upon London, stock of all sorts fell to an almost nominal value. Samson Gideon was nearly the only man who did not share in the alarm. Instead of trying to dispose of his scrip, he wisely invested every pound that he possessed, or that he could borrow, in buying more. Before many days were over, when it was known that the Pretender's army had been routed, he was able to sell out at a vastly increased rate, and to find himself in consequence master of something like a quarter of a million. That wealth, prudently applied during the next fifteen or sixteen years, was nearly quadrupled in the time.

Gideon was described by his contemporaries as 'a shrewd, sarcastic man, possessed of a rich vein of humour; good-hearted and generous in all private relationships, honest and trustworthy in all business matters.' In 1745, when Snow, the banker, as fearful as his neighbours, wrote in plaintive terms to beg that he would immediately repay a sum of 20,000*l.* that he had borrowed of him, the broker adopted a characteristic way of reproving him for his groundless anxiety and melancholy. Procuring a little bottle of hartshorn, he wrapped round it twenty 1,000*l.* notes, and packing it up like a doctor's parcel, addressed it to "Mr. Thomas Snow, goldsmith, near Temple Bar."

He was a great promoter of insurance and annuity funds, and from them he drew a large part of his wealth. "Never grant life annuities to old women," he used to say; "they wither, but they never die." And if he was in attendance at the office when a sickly, asthmatic looking person came for an insurance, he would exclaim, "Ay, ay, you may cough, but it shan't save you six months' purchase!"

Gideon's great ambition was to found an English house. He was too old, he said, to change his own religion; but he brought up his children as Christians, taking special interest in the education of the eldest of them who, when a boy of eleven, was made a baronet through Walpole's influence. Once, it is said, the honest man attempted to catechize this son on the cardinal points of his faith. "Who made you?" was his first question. "God," answered the lad. "Who redeemed you?" he next asked, without oppression of his easy conscience. "Jesus Christ," was the reply. But what was the third question? Gideon could not remember what he ought

in Leman Street, Goodman's Fields. He died in 1782, leaving four sons, George, Asher, Benjamin, and Abraham, to carry on his business. The two younger, born, the one in 1755, and the other in 1756, were the most prosperous. Either separately, or in company with the others, they carried on their business in Leman Street till 1792.* In that year they took a house in Capel Street, opposite the Bank of England, and began using the wealth they had accumulated as stock-brokers and money-lenders. In Abraham Newland, chief cashier of the Bank, they had a good friend.† Knowing them to be honest and enterprising men, he intrusted them with much of the business that came in his way; and as at that time the managers of the Bank were busy in contracting loans for the Government, then overwhelmed with the foreign warfare occasioned by the French Revolution, the Goldsmids had plenty to do. They soon established a large connection, winning everywhere respect for the strict promptitude and honour with which they managed all their transactions. Chance, as well as their own good sense, was in their favour. In one year they gained two sweepstakes of vast amounts in the great lotteries still in fashion, besides 1,000*l.*'s worth of stock and several other prizes. In 1794, when a great many of their neighbours were ruined, their

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to say. "Who—who—who," he stammered out—adding at last, with a reckless appropriation of the first thought that occurred to him, "who gave you that hat?" Young Samson had answered boldly before; he now said as boldly, "The Holy Ghost."

Like tolerance of all creeds was shown by Gideon in the will made public after his death on the 17th of October, 1762. He left 1,000*l.* to the synagogue in which he had worshipped, and 2,000*l.* to the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, besides 1,000*l.* to the London Hospital, and other bequests to worthy institutions of all sorts. 'Gideon is dead, worth more than the whole land of Canaan,' it was said in a contemporary letter. 'He has left the reversion of all his milk and honey, after his son and daughter and their children, to the Duke of Devonshire, without insisting on the duke's taking his name or being circumcised.'—*Gentleman's Magazine*; FRANCIS, *Curiosities of the Stock Exchange.*

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxx., part ii., p. 884.

† LAWSON, *History of Banking.*

entire losses from bad debts amounted to only 50*l.* Benjamin Goldsmid, indeed, shared with Nathan Rothschild the repute of possessing unequalled skill in estimating the worth of every name, English or foreign, that could be found on the back of a bill. That, and the consequent skill in making money, were nearly all that the two men had in common. Both of the Goldsmids were as generous as they were rich. Accumulating wealth with unheard-of rapidity, they distributed in charity much more than the tithes prescribed by their Mosaic law. Numberless instances of their co-operation in every sort of philanthropic work are on record, and the memory of their princely benevolence has not yet ceased among old City men. They were also famous for the splendid hospitality with which they entertained all the leaders of society in their day. They built themselves great houses in town; and they invested portions of their wealth in buying country residences. Abraham became master of Morden; Benjamin made a home for his wife and seven children at Roehampton.*

He did not himself enjoy it long. On the morning of the 11th of April, 1808, when he was only fifty-three years old, he hanged himself from his own bedstead. Of a plethoric disposition, he had, while yet a young man, seriously injured his constitution by a reckless habit of blood-letting, and that had brought upon him occasional fits of melancholy, prompting him at last to suicide.†

The mischief did not end there. Abraham Goldsmid never ceased to grieve for his brother. The two, it was said, had all life long been singularly devoted to one another. Every step in their rapid rise to fortune had been made by them together, and nothing had ever arisen to cause difference between them, or lack of interest in one another's movements. Abraham had been reputed the best man of

* *European Magazine; Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxx., part ii., p. 384.

† *Ibid.*, vol. lxxviii., part i., p. 457

business; but if it was so, his business powers were shattered by his brother's death. Every enterprise in which he embarked during the next two years was more or less unfortunate. At last, in 1810, he staked all his wealth and all his credit upon a new Government loan for 14,000,000*l.* That sum he and Sir Francis Baring contracted to supply. It was expected that the shares would sell well and that much profit would accrue to the first purchasers, and Abraham Goldsmid accordingly induced all his friends to take them up freely. He was greatly disappointed at finding that, partly from the bad odour in which the English Government was just then, and partly from an opposition raised by younger men against such old leaders of the Stock Exchange as himself and Baring, the shares fell heavily upon the market. Sold cheaply at first, they steadily declined in value. Goldsmid estimated that he had lost 200,000*l.* by the speculation, and that nearly all his friends were sufferers in like proportion. This increased his melancholy, and on the 28th of September, when there was another fall in prices, he went home in a very excited state. After dinner he went into the garden and shot himself.*

Fourteen days before, died Francis Baring, a merchant worthier and richer than either of the Goldsmids, famous, even amongst his enemies, as 'a man of consummate knowledge and inflexible honour.' 'Few men,' it was said, 'understood better the real interests of trade, and few men arrived at the highest rank of commercial life with more unsullied integrity.'† Lord Shelburne styled him 'the prince of merchants,' and turned to him as chief and best adviser on all questions of commerce and finance during his brief term of office.‡ Pitt, coming into power in 1783, regarded him with equal honour. To him he went for help in settlement of the difficulties on matters of trade that sprang up between England and the insurgent colonies of America. To him also

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lxxx., part ii., p. 382. † *Ibid.*
‡ VINCENT NOLTE, p. 158.

he looked for guidance both in the management of the East India Company and in defence of the Government measures assailed by Fox and all the Whigs.* Baring entered Parliament as Tory member for Grampound, in Cornwall, in 1784, and he retained his seat for more than twenty years.† In 1784, moreover, the year of re-organization consequent on the passing of Pitt's famous bill, he became a director of the East India Company, to continue during many years its most active and influential governor.‡ He was also for a long time one of the principal managers of the Bank of England; and in 1797, when Sir William Pulteney introduced his bill for its virtual abolition, he wrote two powerful pamphlets on the subject, besides taking an energetic part in opposition to the bill in the House of Commons.§ Though a Tory and a stout defender of the monopolies of the Bank and the East India Company, he was, in general matters, an advocate of free trade. "Every regulation," he said, in one of his Parliamentary speeches, "is a restriction, and, as such, contrary to that freedom which I hold to be the first principle of the well-being of commerce. A restriction or regulation may, doubtless, answer the political purpose for which it is imposed; but as commerce is not a simple thing, but a thing of a thousand relations, what may be of profit in the particular, may be ruinous in general." ‖

It was Baring who, in 1798, found a place for Charles Lamb in the India Office. The poor author was introduced to the rich merchant by Joseph Paice, grandson of an older Joseph Paice, born at Exeter in 1658, who became a wealthy London merchant, and was Member of Parliament for Lyme Regis during many years. Joseph Paice, the younger, carried on the business. To his counting-house in Bread-street Hill, Lamb went from the Bluecoat School, to be transferred thence, in 1795, to the South Sea House,

* *Annual Register*, vol. lii, p. 400. † *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 187.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., pp. 112, 113; *Public Characters of* 1805, p. 33.
§ *Ibid.*, vol. xxxix., p. 204. ‖ *Public Characters of* 1805, p. 34.

of which Paice was a director, before settling down, three years later, in the India Office.* "He took me under his shelter at an early age," said Lamb, "and bestowed some pains upon me. Though bred a Presbyterian and brought up a merchant, he was the finest gentleman of his time. I have seen him stand bareheaded to a poor servant-girl, while she had been inquiring of him the way to some street, in such a posture of unforced civility as neither to embarrass her in the acceptance, nor himself in the offer, of it. I have seen him tenderly escorting a market-woman whom he had encountered in a shower, exalting his umbrella over her poor basket of fruit, that it might receive no damage, with as much carefulness as if she had been a countess." † Elia's good friend was a good friend to everybody. Paice spent all his fortune, something over 30,000*l.*, in charitable ways. "My whole annual income," he wrote in a private note when he was about sixty years old, "is 329*l.* 16*s.* 4*d.*; out of which I steadily allow to my relations in narrow circumstances annually 95*l.* 9*s.*, and to established charities, over and above all incidental demands of a like nature, 35*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*; and the remainder, to defray property-tax, board, apparel, and every incidental expense, is only 199*l.* 4*s.* 10*d.*" ‡

Joseph Paice was not a man to get on in the world. In Francis Baring, however, he had a steady friend and counsellor. Having exhausted the fortune left him by his father, and having no family to which to leave any wealth, Paice was anxious in his old age to turn into ready money, which he could apply in ways congenial to him, the reversion of an estate in Kent to which he was heir. For many years Baring urged him to retain his rights. At last, finding him resolved to take the reversion into the market, the great

* *Family Pictures*, by Miss Manning, the Authoress of *Mary Powell*, Paice's grandniece (London, 1860), pp. 4–6, 22, 23.

† *The Essays of Elia* (London, 1853), p. 131.

‡ *Family Pictures*, pp. 23, 24.

merchant bought it himself for 20,000*l.* That had hardly been done before the original proprietor died suddenly, and Baring found himself master at once of property that he had expected to wait several years for. Thereupon he did what no one but a true gentleman, and a man of rare honour, would have thought of doing. He immediately forwarded to his friend a draft for 7,000*l.* "As I have maturely considered every circumstance that attaches to the question," he said in the letter that went with the money, "the result is what you will find enclosed, which it is absolutely necessary for my peace of mind should remain without alteration. I will not wound your delicacy with reasons why it should be one sum in preference to another; but I hope you will suffer me to assure you that neither myself nor any of my family will ever receive the return of any part of this sum, either now or hereafter. With this view you will permit me to request an assurance from yourself, which I know to be sacred, that you will not give or bequeath to the whole or any part of my family what shall exceed the value of 100*l.*"*

Well might Baring be called the prince of English merchants. 'At his death,' according to the common and true judgment of his friends, 'he was the first merchant in England; first in knowledge and talent, character and opulence.'† "My dear sir," Baring said to Paice, on the last day of October, 1810, "we have enjoyed a friendship of nearly seventy years."‡ It was a friendship very full of happiness to both men. Paice earnestly desired, it is said, that he might not survive his comrade; and his wish was curiously met. Paice died on the 4th, Baring on the 11th of September, 1810.§

Francis Baring had been made a baronet in 1793.‖ He left property worth 1,100,000*l.* and a great house of business, to become yet greater and more remunerative in the hands

* *Family Pictures*, p. 84.
† *European Magazine.*
‡ *Family Pictures*, p. 87.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 88; *European Magazine.*
‖ *Public Characters*, p. 35.

of his sons. Of these sons, five in all, Thomas, the eldest, born in 1772, inheriting his father's baronetcy and the greater part of his property, took no active share in the business. William and George, the youngest, passed most of their busy years in India. Alexander and Henry took charge of the London establishment. Henry's share in the management, however, was of short duration. He was a great gambler and an almost constant frequenter of the gaming tables of Baden Baden and other towns on the Continent.* Therein he made money. But it was not wealth that could add to the credit of the house of Baring Brothers, and he was accordingly induced to retire from business. For eighteen years the exclusive direction of affairs was with Alexander, the second son.

Alexander Baring was born on the 27th of October, 1774.† He was educated partly in Germany and partly in England, before being placed, for commercial schooling; in the great Amsterdam house of Hope and Company, seventy or eighty years ago the greatest mercantile and banking establishment in the world.‡ The youngest partner in that house was Peter Cæsar Labouchere, whose friendship for young Baring lasted through life. In 1796 he married the young man's sister Dorothy, and by her became father of the present Lord Taunton.§

Having mastered the whole mystery of European commerce under the guidance of the Hopes, Alexander Baring next determined to make personal observation of the younger commerce of America. His father sanctioned the project;

* Vincent Nolte, p. 158.

† *Gentleman's Magazine* (New Series), vol. xxx., p. 89.

‡ The house had been founded near the end of the seventeenth century by Henry Hope, a Scotchman, born in Boston, who, early in life, settled in Amsterdam. In Baring's time it comprised several members of the family, the principal being three brothers, grandsons of old Henry Hope: Adrian, who lived in Amsterdam; Henry Philip, who resided sometimes at the Hague and sometimes in England; and Thomas, who settled in England, the father of Mr. Beresford Hope.

§ Vincent Nolte, p. 159.

but urged him to be careful on two points—to buy no waste lands in the New World, and not to bring a wife thence. "Uncultivated lands," said shrewd Sir Francis, "can be more readily bought than sold again; and a wife is best suited to the home in which she has been brought up, and cannot be formed or trained a second time." The young man, however, followed neither piece of advice. In 1798, soon after his arrival in the United States, he married the daughter of William Bingham, a rich merchant and influential senator, who bequeathed the sum of 900,000 dollars to his son-in-law. He also made wise investment of a great deal of money, some 30,000*l.* or 40,000*l.*, in purchasing and improving vast tracts of land in Pennsylvania and Maine, soon greatly increased in value by the growth of population in the United States.*

Alexander Baring spent four or five years in America; there having General Washington for one of his friends. When he was about thirty he returned to England, to settle down as chief adviser of his father—soon as chief manager on his own account—in the London business. His wealth and his good sense made him, in spite of some personal disadvantages, as great a favourite in the fashionable as in the commercial world. Miss Berry, the friend of Horace Walpole, sat next to him at dinner on the 26th of March, 1808. He was, she said, 'rather a heavy-loooking young man, with a hesitating manner; but very clear in his ideas, and unassuming in his manners.' †

Soon the whole world had proof of the strong will and wonderful power of organization that were beneath that modest exterior. With Alexander Baring's supremacy began the European fame and influence of the house of Baring. The young merchant-prince at once brought his wisdom to bear on every question affecting the commercial welfare of

* Vincent Nolte, p. 159.

† *Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry* (London, 1865), vol. ii., p. 344.

England. Entering Parliament, as member for Taunton, in 1806,* he at once took rank with the great financiers and economists of half a century ago. His stutter and oratorical deficiency lessened the weight of his counsels; but they were always listened to with respect, and very often followed. In the budget of 1811, for instance, it was proposed to raise money by levying a tax of a penny a pound on the cotton-wool imported from all districts save British and Portuguese colonies. Baring showed that the measure would be fraught with two-fold evil; that it would deprive England of great quantities of American cotton, even then found far more serviceable than any that could be got from the East or the West Indies; and that, in keeping American cotton out of England, it would encourage American manufactures, and so cause further injury to our trade. The foolish scheme was withdrawn in that year, and, on its revival in 1813, being again opposed by Baring and his fellow-thinkers, it was finally abandoned.†

In the meanwhile Baring was taking a prominent part in other questions about America. In 1812 he supported Henry Brougham in his opposition to the famous Orders in Council of 1807 and 1809, directing stringent search in all foreign vessels for English seamen and contraband articles. Those orders, it was urged, had already proved very disastrous to the commercial and manufacturing interests of England, and were the cause of much needless misery to great numbers of British subjects. They were soon after made an excuse for the American declaration of war with England. In the House of Commons, Baring pointed this out, and found in it good reasons for condemning the Ministry. As war had been brought about, however, he insisted that it must be carried through with zeal. He boldly advocated the blockading of all the ports of the United States; and when peace had been negotiated, in

* *Gentleman's Magazine* (New Series), vol. xxx., p. 89.

† *Annual Register*, vol. liii., pp. 67, 68; vol. lv., pp. 68, 70.

December, 1814, he angrily denounced the negotiators for supineness.* The wisdom of his complaints has been since abundantly proved by the frequent disputes concerning right of search in the case of American vessels.

In all the commercial legislation of the latter part of George the Third's reign, and the whole of George the Fourth's, Baring took an influential part. In 1815 he stoutly opposed a measure for establishing the price at which foreign corn might be imported, that price being fixed for the protection of English grain. Therein he failed.† Next year he succeeded in his resistance of the income tax.‡ In 1821, in the discussions concerning the resumption of Bank payments, he advocated a modification of the established rules regarding currency. Something must be done, he said, to meet the growing wants of an increasing population, driven to all sorts of difficulties through scarcity of floating coin, and in the absence of its equivalent in paper. "No country before ever presented the continuance of so extraordinary a spectacle as that of living under a progressive increase in the value of money and decrease in the value of the productions of the people." On this occasion Baring moved for a select committee to inquire into the financial embarrassments of the nation, and to suggest remedies for the evil. In this, and in other efforts to improve the state of the currency, however, he failed.§

In the management of his own commercial affairs he certainly did not fail. The greatest proof of his influence in the monetary world appeared in 1818. "There are six great Powers in Europe—England, France, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Baring Brothers," said the Duc de Richelieu in that year; and with reason. Baring had just negotiated

* *Annual Register*, vol. liv., p. 92; lv., p. 4; lvii., p. 17; *Edinburgh Review*, vol, xii., pp. 236-245; vol. xliv. pp. 77, 78, 348.

† *Annual Register*, vol. lvii., pp. 5, 6.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. lviii., p. 22.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. lxiii., pp. 70, 71; *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xci., part i., pp 267, 359, 360, 632.

for the French Government a loan of 27,238,938 francs, in five per cent. rentes, at a rate of 67 francs to the 100. By that means the restored Bourbons were able to buy off the projected occupation of France for five years by Russian, Prussian, and Austrian troops, and the convention of Aix-la-Chapelle was brought about. Baring's 'power,' however, did not end there. The sudden issue of State paper for the loan of 27,000,000 francs caused a depression of the Funds from 67 to 58, and consequently gave room for much wild speculation, and made certain the failure of many honest traders. Baring thereupon persuaded Richelieu to annul the contract for half of his loan, and at the same time induced the bankers who had joined with him in effecting it—the Hopes and the Rothschilds being the principal—to agree to the surrender. That restored the funds to something like their proper condition. All through the conferences of the plenipotentiaries at Aix-la-Chapelle, Baring was in attendance to answer questions, give advice, and see that the decisions arrived at were in accordance with sound monetary principles.*

From that time the chief business of the house of Baring Brothers lay in the negotiation of foreign loans. Nearly all the merit of this must be assigned to Alexander Baring. Having brought the house, however, to the highest pitch of its greatness, he retired from all active part in its direction when he was only fifty-four years old. One of his nephews, Mr. John Baring, had, in 1823, joined with Mr. Joshua Bates, an American, in establishing a large commission-agency in Boston. Another nephew, Mr. Thomas Baring, had been for some time engaged in the house of Hope, at Amsterdam. In 1825, on the advice of his brother-in-law, Peter Labouchere, Alexander Baring resolved to take into partnership with him his son Francis, both his nephews, and Joshua Bates as well; and three years later, in 1828,

* Vincent Nolte, pp. 267, 268; *Annual Register*, vol. lx., pp. 145, 146 vol. lxi., p. 128; *Gentleman's Magazine*, vols. lxxxi., lxxxii.

finding that the young men worked well, he left the business altogether in their hands, surrendering his part in the management, and appointing as a substitute his son-in-law, Mr. Humphrey St. John Mildmay. Henceforth the house was known as Baring and Company, to have for its principal directors, during more than thirty years, Mr. Joshua Bates, who died in 1864,* and Mr. Thomas Baring, the present Member of Parliament for Huntingdon.

As early as 1811, Alexander Baring had been rich enough to buy an estate at Shoreham for 100,000*l.* He adorned it with almost the choicest private collection of paintings to be found in England. He was reputed an excellent judge of pictures. If now and then he made mistakes, his error was shared by other competent critics. Of this an instance occurs in Thomas Moore's *Diary*; where, by the way, we find ample proof of the witty poet's liking for the good dinners and the good society to be met with at the merchant's table. One day in June, 1829, says Moore, "Mrs. Baring showed me some new pictures that Baring had just bought. She told me of a picture of

* Bates was born at Weymouth, near Boston, in 1788. For several years, beginning with 1803, he was a clerk in the great American house of W. R. and W. Gray. In 1815 or 1816, his employers sent him as confidential agent to the north of Europe. Returning to Boston a few years later, he soon entered into partnership with John Baring, each partner providing 20,000*l.*, with which to start the business. From 1825, when the business was merged into that of Baring and Co., to the time of his death, he resided almost constantly in London. For many years he was in intimate friendship with Coleridge, and during that period Bates's drawing-room was a famous haunt of the admirers of the great thinker and great talker. Another of Joshua Bates's favourites was Prince Louis Napoleon. The close and trustful friendship existing before 1848 between the wealthy merchant and the modest refugee continued, without hinderance, we are assured, after the refugee had become Emperor of the French. Among many other proofs of his benevolent disposition, Bates spent 50,000 dollars in buying some of the best European books for the free library of Boston, and sent over another sum of 50,000 dollars to be funded for its benefit, the interest being every year applied to the purchase of more books. He died on the 24th September, 1864, leaving a large fortune to his only surviving child, Madame Van de Weyer, wife of the Belgian ambassador.

Rembrandt that Baring once bought at a very large price, which used to make Sir Thomas Lawrence unhappy, from its being a finer Rembrandt than that of Angerstein. After contemplating it, however, for several hours one day, he came to the conclusion that it was too highly finished to be a genuine Rembrandt; and, in consequence of this opinion of his, the picture fell in value instantly."* At another time, a picture which Baring had paid 5,000*l.* for, as a Correggio, was in like manner declared an imitation, and accordingly reduced in price to 500*l.* or less.† In 1826, Baring made a splendid addition to his gallery, by purchasing Lord Radstock's collection, including a Titian, priced at 1,800 guineas, and a Giorgione at 700.‡

In other ways Baring showed an enlightened taste and disposition. His father had been one of the founders of the London Institution in 1806. In 1825 the son was chosen one of the council of the London University, just founded at a cost of 30,000*l.*§ In 1828 he presided at a festival at Freemasons' Tavern in celebration of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts.‖ It was through him, moreover, though more for commercial than any other reasons, that Sir Robert Peel was induced, in the following year, to abandon a project for bringing all the Friendly Societies in England under the management of the Government. This measure gave umbrage to great numbers, and, after vainly petitioning on the matter, they decided upon a system of coercion. On the morning before the bill was to be read a third time, notices were posted all over the country requesting all who had any money invested through the agency of Friendly Societies to draw it out if the obnoxious bill was made law. As the total deposits for the whole kingdom were very

* *Memoirs of Thomas Moore*, edited by Lord John Russell, vol. vi, p. 56.
† *Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 88.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 66.
§ *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xcv., part ii., p. 628.
‖ *Ibid.*, vol. xcviii., part ii., p. 558.

heavy, that proposal caused much excitement in the money market. Therefore, in the evening, when Sir Robert Peel brought forward his bill, Baring rose and protested. "Does my right honourable friend know what he is doing? This morning I was astonished to find the Funds fallen two per cent., with no apparent reason for the fall. Then I found that it was caused by the determination of these depositors to withdraw all their money from public use. Sir, this is a very serious measure, very serious indeed. I trust the House will not endorse it without grave consideration." The result of that speech was the withdrawal of the bill, and the substitution for it, next session, of another, framed by the delegates of the Friendly Societies themselves.

Alexander Baring began political life as a Whig, the friend and supporter of Lord Brougham, Lord John Russell, and other liberal reformers. Soon after his retirement from business, however, he changed his policy. He was alarmed at the growing excitement of the English people on the question of Parliamentary reform. "It is impossible," he said, in November, 1829, "for rich capitalists to remain in a country exposed to tumultuary meetings. Great numbers of manufacturers have been brought to this country at various times from other countries, some to escape civil and some religious persecutions. But there is no persecution so fatal as a mob persecution. Every other persecution it is possible to find some means of softening; but mob persecution is unrelenting and implacable. Despotism itself is to be preferred to mob persecution."* Therefore he went over to the side of despotism. For his opposition to the Reform Bill his windows were broken in 1831, and from that year he sided on all questions with the Tories.

On the formation of Sir Robert Peel's new Government in 1834, Baring took office as President of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint. In April, 1835, he was raised to the peerage as Lord Ashburton.† Henceforth, with one

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, New Series, vol. xxx., p. 89. † *Ibid.*, p. 90.

famous exception, he took no prominent part in public affairs.

The exception was in 1841. On Peel's return to power in that year the most pressing business before him related to a question on which Baring had had much to say seven-and-thirty years before. One of his complaints at the way in which peace had been established with America in 1814 concerned the question as to the north-eastern boundary line of the United States from British America. The difficulty arose from an inadvertence in drawing up the treaty of 1783, it being there left doubtful which of two lines of highlands were to form the separation. Hence there was debateable ground of nearly a hundred miles' breadth, and with an entire area of 6,750,000 acres. This was one of the grounds of quarrel in 1811, and in the pacification of 1814 Baring found great fault with the negotiators for leaving the question still unsettled. They had referred it to the arbitration of the King of the Netherlands. For seventeen years his Majesty studied or pretended to study the question without arriving at any decision. At last, in 1831, he proposed to reject both lines and take for boundary line the stream of the river St. John, thus giving to England 2,636,160 of the disputed acres. To this suggestion Lord Palmerston, who was then Foreign Secretary, readily acceded. President Jackson and the American Government also approved of it; but there was so much opposition raised by certain demagogues in the United States, who, eager to have all the territory in their own hands, declared that the King of the Netherlands had exceeded his authority in proposing a third line, that nothing came of it. Over and over again the English Government sought to effect an arrangement, but the Americans were obstinate. The dispute lasted ten years, and when Sir Robert Peel resumed power in 1841, it seemed almost certain to end in war. Peel, however, determined to make one more peaceful effort. He appointed Lord Ashburton to proceed to Washington,

and there effect, if it was any how possible, some sort of settlement. 'Lord Ashburton,' said one, who took part in the negotiation, 'was a nobleman well adapted to the occasion, from his connection by marriage and property with the United States. He was not a trained ambassador, but his general knowledge of business, straightforwardness, and good sense, were qualities far more valuable than those to be generally found in professional diplomatists, whose proceedings so often embroil instead of conciliating.' Lord Ashburton proceeded to the United States in March, 1842. There many of the commissioners appointed to treat with him were his personal friends, and his arguments took effect. He secured a compromise yet more favourable to England than that designed by the King of the Netherlands, Great Britain being left in possession of 3,370,000 acres, America of 3,413,000. This was the Treaty of Washington, or the Ashburton Treaty, signed on the 9th of August, 1842.*

Lord Ashburton died, seventy-four years old, on the 13th of May, 1848.† His son, William Bingham Baring, who succeeded to the peerage, had nothing to do with commerce, and the second son, Francis, who became Lord Ashburton a few years ago, soon retired from business. The Barings still flourish and draw money, through commercial channels, from all quarters of the world; but of the living, if they had here to be spoken of, perhaps nothing more important, as regards their mercantile history, could be said than that they are good and zealous followers of the system of money-making established by old Sir Francis Baring and his son Alexander, Baron Ashburton.

Yet more famous and successful, however, in the commercial history of the last half-century, has been the house that chiefly owes its prosperity to the enterprise of Nathan Meyer Rothschild, who was born on the 16th of September,

* Mr. Thomas Colley Grattan, cited by Messrs. Sanford and Townsend in *The Great Governing Families of England* (London, 1865), vol. ii., pp. 128–130.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, New Series, vol. xxx., p. 90.

1776, at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. There, in the vilest part of the town, the quarter specially assigned to the Jew money-lenders, pawnbrokers, old-clothes-men, and the like, and therefore known as the Juden-gasse or Jews' Street, his grandfather had been settled as a merchant or dealer of some sort from near the beginning of the eighteenth century; and there his father, Meyer Amschel, or Anselm, was born in 1743, six years before Goethe. According to one report this Meyer Anselm had been educated by kind strangers to become a priest, and had already acquired some fame as a learned archæologist and numismatist, when his father brought him home, and forced him to settle down as a broker in Frankfort. According to another and more probable account, he was left a penniless orphan at the age of eleven, and had to work his way on foot to Hanover, there to get some employment as a money-changer's shop-boy, and slowly to save money enough to take him back to Frankfort, when he was nearly thirty years old. At any rate, he was married and established in Frankfort as a money-lender, pawnbroker, and dealer in second-hand goods in 1772. His little shop in Jews' Street was known by its sign of the Red Shield, or Roth-Schild, whence he himself acquired the name of Meyer Anselm Rothschild. It was a busier shop than any other in the neighbourhood, frequented by the greatest persons in Frankfort, who came either to borrow money, or to buy the pictures, coins, cameos, and other rarities of which the broker was a skilful collector. One of these was William, Landgrave of Hesse, who, after several years' trial of old Rothschild, liked him so well, that when the French bombarded Frankfort in 1796, he gave him and his treasures safe housing in his fortified house at Cassel. The Jews' Street was destroyed by the French, and on their retirement its old inmates were allowed to disperse themselves over Frankfort, and to live on an equality with their Christian neighbours. Meyer Rothschild, therefore, as soon as he went back to the town, built himself a handsome house in one of its most

fashionable parts. He was appointed foreign banker and financial agent of Landgrave William, and at once entered on a more extensive and more profitable range of business than had previously been within his reach. He was a rich man in 1806, when the Landgrave, being in his turn forced to flee from the onslaught of Napoleon, just then carving out a kingdom of Westphalia for his brother Jerome, intrusted to him his treasure of three million florins, something like 250,000*l.* This money he invested very successfully; lending at exorbitant rates, pawning for trifling sums the property of owners who in those unsettled times were never able to redeem their property, and turning pence and pounds in every possible way that the usurer at any rate would consider honest. When he died, in 1812, he left twelve million florins to be divided among his five sons, Anselm, Solomon, Nathan Meyer, Charles, and James. From these five sons he exacted an oath upon his death-bed, that they would keep his business intact, extending it as much as they could, but acting always in partnership, so that the world might know only one house of Rothschild. The oath was strictly kept, with this exception, that Nathan, the third son, proving the cleverest of them all, came to be practically the head of the house in place of his elder brother Anselm.*

Fourteen or fifteen years before that, Nathan had left Frankfort to settle in Manchester. "There was not room enough for all of us in Frankfort," he said, some thirty years later. "I dealt in English goods. One great trader came there who had the market to himself. He was quite the great man, and did us a favour if he sold us goods. Somehow I offended him, and he refused to show me his patterns. This was on a Tuesday. I said to my father, 'I will go to England.' I could speak nothing but German. On the Thursday I started. The nearer I got to England, the

* *Das Haus Rothschild* (Prag., 1857), Thiel i., *passim*; *Gentleman's Magazine*, New Series, vol vi.. pp. 325–330; Francis, p. 293.

cheaper goods were. As soon as I got to Manchester, I laid out all my money, things were so cheap; and I made good profit." *

Manchester, then full of the turmoil of the new cotton trade, and crowded with young adventurers glad to borrow money at high rates of interest, for the sake of investing as manufacturers or warehousemen, was the best possible field for young Rothschild's talents, and he reaped from it a golden harvest. "I soon found," he continued in his personal narrative, "that there were three profits—the raw material, the dyeing, and the manufacturing. I said to the manufacturer, 'I will supply you with material and dye, and you shall supply me with the manufactured goods.' So I got three profits instead of one, and I could sell goods cheaper than anybody! In a short time I made my 20,000*l.* into 60,000*l.* My success all turned on one maxim. I said, 'I can do what another man can, and so I am a match for the man with the patterns and for all the rest of them!' Another advantage I had. I was an off-hand man; I made my bargains at once." Rothschild started with another maxim, 'to have nothing to do with an unlucky place or an unlucky man.' "I have seen," he said, "many clever men, very clever men, who had not shoes to their feet. I never act with them. Their advice sounds very well; but fate is against them: they cannot get on themselves, and if they cannot do good to themselves, can they do good to me?" †

Resolving to govern his life by such rules, Nathan Rothschild put himself in a sure way to wealth. In or near the year 1803, after five or six years passed in Manchester, he proceeded to settle in London, considering that the most successful of all his businesses, that of money-lending, could be carried on quite as well in one place as another, and that other work as remunerative would be more within reach in London than in any smaller town. This change, indeed, was part of a plan by which eventually the five brothers

* Buxton, *Life of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton.* † *Ibid.*

took possession of all the chief centres of European commerce, Anselm remaining in Frankfort, Solomon being sometimes in Berlin, sometimes in Vienna, Charles being in Naples, James in Paris, and Nathan in London.

In 1806 Nathan married a daughter of Levi Barnet Cohen, one of the wealthiest Jew merchants then in London. Prudent Cohen, it was said, after he had accepted him as his daughter's suitor, became nervous about the extent of his property. A man who speculated so recklessly, he thought, was very likely to be speculating with other people's money. He therefore asked for proof of young Rothschild's wealth. Young Rothschild refused to give it, answering, that as far as wealth and good character went, Mr. Cohen could not do better than give him all his daughters in marriage.*

If 'good character' meant steadiness and skill in money-making, he was certainly right. Nathan Rothschild was without a rival in that art. Having persistently advanced his fortune in private ways through some years, he began, in 1810, to trade in Government securities. He bought up at a discount a number of Wellington's drafts for the expenses of the Peninsular war, which the Treasury had no funds at hand for meeting, and by transferring them to the Government at par, with a prolongation of the term of payment, he managed to help it out of a difficulty, and at the same time to insure a large profit for himself. "When the Government had got the money," he said, "they did not know how to get it to Portugal. I undertook all that, and I sent it"—by help of the continental Rothschilds—"through France. It was the best business I ever did." †

It was this business that started him on a new stage in his glittering—more glittering than brilliant—course of money-making. This and other like services that followed made friends for him at the Treasury, and so helped him to procure early information as to the progress of war and the policy of the English and foreign governments, which gave him a

* *Gentleman's Magazine.* † *Life of Buxton.*

notable advantage over his fellow stock-jobbers. The ramifications of the Rothschild establishments and connections on the Continent, moreover, made him the best agent of the Government in transmitting money to the armies in Spain and elsewhere, and this agency he made profitable to himself in various ways. Finding the immense power that he derived from his appliances for securing early information in foreign affairs, he made it his business to extend and increase them to the very utmost. He turned pigeon-fancier, and, buying all the best birds he could find, he employed some of his leisure in training them, and so organized a machinery for rapid transmission of messages unrivalled in the days when railways and telegraphs were yet unknown. He made careful study of routes, distances, and local facilities for quick travelling, and mapped out new roads for the passage of his human agents carrying documents or money. The South-Eastern Railway Company, it is said, established their line of steamers between Folkestone and Boulogne because it was found that Rothschild had already proved that route to be the best for the despatch of his swift rowing boats.

Rothschild's greatest achievement in overreaching distance and his fellow-speculators was in 1815. He was near the Château d'Hougoumont on the 18th of June, watching, as eagerly as Buonaparte and Wellington themselves, the progress of the Battle of Waterloo. All day long he followed the fighting with strained eyes, knowing that on its issue depended his welfare as well as Europe's. At sunset he saw that the victory was with Wellington and the Allies. Then, without a moment's delay, he mounted a horse that had been kept in readiness for him, and hurried homewards. Everywhere on his road fresh horses or carriages were in waiting to help him over the ground. Riding or driving all night, he reached Ostend at daybreak, to find the sea so stormy that the boatmen refused to trust themselves to it. At last he prevailed upon a fisherman to make the venture for a reward of 80*l.* In that way he managed to reach Dover. At Dover, and at the intermediate stages on the

road to London, other horses were in waiting, and he was in London before midnight. Next morning, the morning of the 20th of June, he was one of the first to enter the Stock Exchange. In gloomy whispers he told those who, as usual, crowded round him for news, that Blucher and his Prussians had been routed by Napoleon before Wellington had been able to reach the field; that by himself he could not possibly succeed, and therefore the cause of England and her allies was lost. The funds fell, as they were meant to fall. Every one was anxious to sell, and Rothschild and his accredited agents scoffed at all who brought them scrip for purchase. But scores of unknown agents were at work all that day and all the next. Before the Stock Exchange closed on the afternoon of the second day, when Nathan Rothschild's strong boxes were full of paper, he announced, an hour or so before the news came through other channels, the real issue of the contest. Very soon the funds were higher than they had been during many previous weeks; and Rothschild found that he had made something like a million pounds by his quick travelling and clever misrepresentation.*

Other millions were collected, rather more slowly, by other transactions of a like nature. Sometimes the mighty stock-jobber was unsuccessful. In negotiating the English loan for 12,000,000*l.* in 1819, almost the first national loan for which he was a contractor, he lost something.† He suffered a little also from a French loan in 1823, which fell ten per cent. in a few days' time. In both those instances, however, he managed to get rid of his bad bargains before his customers knew all the facts, and so threw nearly all the burden upon them. By his association in Lord Bexley's scheme for funding exchequer bills in a three and a half per cent. stock, he was said to be a sufferer to the extent of nearly 500,000*l.*‡

A great part of Rothschild's wealth, however, came from his negotiations of foreign loans. These he was the first to

* Martin, *Stories of Bankers* (London, 1865), pp. 74–76. This little book has helped me to some other anecdotes about City men.

† Francis, p. 297. ‡ *Gentleman's Magazine.*

make popular in the English market. Preparing for his customers precise details of the state of foreign monetary projects, he further helped those who wished to share in them by establishing, under his own management, a mode of paying the dividends in London, and at an organized tariff of English money. He soon came to be the principal agent of all the great or needy governments—Russian, Turkish, French, German, North American, and South American—in disposing of their scrip to the English stock-jobbers.*

* The following is a list of the principal foreign loans contracted in England during the first few years in which this business was carried on largely among us, showing their contractors, and the prices at which they were issued :—

1818.	Prussian	£5,000,000	at 5 per cent.	N. M. Rothschild	72	per cent.
1821.	Spanish	1,500,000	„ „	E. F. Haldiman	56	„
1822.	Prussian	3,500,000	„ „	N. M. Rothschild	84	„
„	Russian	3,500,000	„ „	N. M. Rothschild	82	„
„	Columbian	2,000,000	at 6 per cent.	Herring, Graham, & Co. . .	84	„
„	Chilian	1,000,000	„ „	Hallett Brothers	70	„
„	Peruvian	450,000	„ „	Frys & Chapman	88	„
1823.	Austrian	2,500,000	at 5 per cent.	N. M. Rothschild	82	„
„	Portuguese	1,500,000	„ „	B. A. Goldschmidt & Co. . .	87	„
„	Spanish	1,500,000	„ „	J. Campbell & Co.	30¼	„
1824.	Columbian	4,750,000	at 6 per cent.	B. A. Goldschmidt & Co.	88½	„
„	Brazilian	3,200,000	at 5 per cent.	T. Wilson & Co.	75	„
„	Mexican	3,200,000	„ „	B. A. Goldschmidt & Co. . .	58	„
„	Neapolitan	2,500,000	„ „	N. M. Rothschild	92½	„
„	Buenos Ayres	1,000,000	at 6 per cent.	Baring Brothers	85	„
„	Greek	800,000	at 5 per cent.	Loughman & Co.	59	„
„	Peruvian	750,000	at 6 per cent.	Frys & Chapman	82	„
1825.	Danish	5,500,000	at 3 per cent.	T. Wilson & Co.	75	„
„	Mexican	3,200,000	at 6 per cent.	Barclay, Herring, & Co. . .	89¾	„
„	Brazilian	2,000,000	at 5 per cent.	N. M. Rothschild	85	„
„	Guatemala	1,428,571	at 6 per cent.	J. & A. Powles	73	„
„	Greek	1,000,000	at 5 per cent.	Ricardos	56½	„
„	Peruvian	616,000	at 6 per cent.	Frys & Chapman	78	„
„	Guadaljava	600,000	at 5 per cent.	W. Edwards, jun.	60	„
1829.	Brazilian	800,000	„ „	Rothschild & Wilson		
1832.	Belgian	2,000,000	„ „	N. M. Rothschild	85	„

—GILBART, *History and Principles of Banking* (London, 1834), p. 59.

Out of nearly all such transactions he secured large profits; one of them by itself yielding the 115,000*l.* with which he bought the estate of Gunnersbury, near London. They helped him also in his old business of bill discounting. 'He never,' it was said just after his death, 'hesitated for a moment in fixing the rate, either as a drawer or as a taker, on any part of the world; and his memory was so retentive that, notwithstanding the immense transactions on which he entered on every foreign post day, and that he never took a note of them, he could, on his return home, with perfect exactness dictate the whole to his clerks.'*

In all sorts of other ways of making money Nathan Rothschild was as clever. The story of his mercury transactions is well known to many. Nearly all the mercury procurable in Europe comes either from Idria on Illyria, or from Almaden in Spain. The Almaden mines, famous and profitable through five-and-twenty centuries, had fallen for some years into disuse before 1831, when Rothschild, becoming contractor for a Spanish loan, proposed, as recompense for his trouble, to hold them for a certain term at a nominal rental. That was cheerfully agreed to, and the mines soon began to give token of renewed activity. In a kindred way the great merchant obtained possession of the mines at Idria. The consequence was that the price of mercury was suddenly doubled. Rothschild had quietly acquired a monopoly of the article, and he was able to charge for it whatever he thought fit. It was nothing to him that the exorbitant prices which helped to fill his coffers drove some smaller tricksters to scrape off the quicksilver from old looking-glasses and the like, and work it up into poisonous calomel, as well as bad material for new mirrors, thermometers, and so forth.

For this stratagem Rothschild was much and properly abused. His conduct was not often such as could be expected to win the admiration of his fellows. Once he was in need

* *Gentleman's Magazine.*

of bullion, and accordingly went to the Bank parlour to ask for a loan. The gold was given to him on his engagement to return it by a certain day. When the day came Rothschild was again in Threadneedle Street. But instead of the looked-for gold he produced a bundle of notes. The officials in attendance reminded him that the Bank reserve had been broken in upon for his accommodation, and that he had promised to return the money in kind. "Very well, gentlemen," he is reported to have replied, "give me back the notes. I daresay your cashier will honour them with gold from your vaults, and then I can return you bullion."*

The great man's jokes were not very witty. The best of them owes its point to his Jewish pronunciation. At a Lord Mayor's dinner he sat next to a guest noted for his stinginess, who chanced to say that, for his part, he preferred mutton to venison. "Ah, I see," Rothschild answered; "you like mutton because it is sheep (cheap); other people like venison because it is deer (dear)."† Another saying attributed to him gives evidence, if true, of some humour. Once, it is said, a German prince, visiting London, brought letters of credit to the banker. He was shown into the inner room of the famous counting-house in Saint Swithin's Lane, where Rothschild sat, busy with a heap of papers. The name being announced, Rothschild nodded, offered him a chair, and then went on with the work before him. For this treatment the prince, who expected that everything

* Francis, p. 300.

† Somewhat smarter was a speech recorded of Nathan Rothschild's nephew, the great banker at Vienna. During the insurgent times of 1848, some six or eight republicans rushed into his counting-house, informed him that the days of liberty, equality, and fraternity had now arrived, and accordingly insisted on his sharing his wealth with them. "Well, my friends," he said, "what do you suppose is the amount of my wealth?" "Forty million florins," answered one. "You have a good deal overrated it," was the reply; "but never mind that. There are about forty million people in Germany; so that, according to your reckoning, each would expect a florin from me. Here are your florins. Good-morning."

should give way to one of his rank and dignity, was not at all prepared. Standing a minute or two, he exclaimed, "Did you not hear, sir, who I am? I am——" detailing his titles. "Very well," answered Rothschild, "take two chairs."

At another time, two strangers were admitted into this same private room. They were tall foreigners, with moustachios and beards such as were not often to be seen in the City thirty years ago; and Rothschild, always timid, was frightened from the moment of their entrance. He put his own interpretation upon the excited movements with which they fumbled about in their pockets, and before the expected pistols could be produced he had thrown a great ledger in the direction of their heads, and brought in a bevy of clerks by his cries of "Murder!" The strangers were pinioned, and then, after long questionings and explanations, it appeared that they were wealthy bankers from the Continent, who, nervous in the presence of a banker so much more wealthy, had had some difficulty in finding the letters of introduction which they were to present.

During the later years of his life, it was said, Rothschild was always in fear of assassination. "You must be a very happy man, Mr. Rothschild," said a guest at one of the splendid banquets for which his Piccadilly house was famous. "Happy! me happy!" he exclaimed. "What! happy! when just as you are going to dine you have a letter placed in your hands, saying, 'If you do not send me 500*l.* I will blow your brains out!' Me happy!"

Yet it was in the making of money that Rothschild found all the enjoyment of his life, not so much prizing the money when it was made, as finding intense delight in the scram-[illegible]ing and fighting, the plotting and tricking, by means of [illegible]h it was acquired.* "I hope," said another dinner-

[illegible]" says one who knew him well, in a communication with which [illegible]ed me, "is the key to an understanding of Rothschild's cha-[illegible]nbition tended t› the accomplishment of elaborate financial

table companion to him on one occasion, "I hope that your children are not too fond of money and business, to the exclusion of more important things. I am sure you would not wish that." "I am sure I *should* wish that," answered Rothschild. "I wish them to give mind, and soul, and heart, and body, everything, to business. That is the way to be happy. It requires a great deal of boldness, and a great deal of caution, to make a great fortune; and, when you have got it, it requires ten times as much wit to keep it."*

To all who were willing to work in this manner he was an excellent friend. Some of the wealthiest commercial houses now in London, it is said, owe their prosperity to the readiness with which Rothschild, seeing good business qualities in the young men around him, endorsed their bills, and thus gave them a recommendation patent to all the world. There were cases, too, in which he went out of his way to put exceptional opportunities of money-making in the ways of his favourites. Even his charities, according to his own confession, were exceptional, and chiefly indulged in for his own entertainment. "Sometimes to amuse myself," he said, "I give a beggar a guinea. He thinks it is a mistake, and for fear I should find it out, off he runs as hard as he can. I advise you to give a beggar a guinea sometimes. It is very amusing."†

Rothschild, it may well be conceived, had few tastes or pleasures out of the Stock Exchange and the Saint Swithin's Lane counting-house. When Louis Spohr, the violinist and

operations—of making money, if you like; but in this phrase the emphasis must be placed on the *making;* for he did not value either money in itself, or the things that could be procured by it. He had no taste nor inclination for what every Englishman seeks as soon as he has money enough to buy it—comfort in every respect. His ambition was to arrive at his aim more quickly and more effectually than others, and to steer towards it with all his energy. When his end was reached, it had lost all its charm for him, and he turned his never-wearying mind to something else."

* *Life of Buxton.* † *Ibid.*

composer, called upon him in June, 1820, with a letter of introduction from his brother in Frankfort, he said to him, "I understand nothing of music. This"—patting his pocket and rattling the loose coins therein—"is my music: we understand that on 'Change. But you can come and dine with me at my counting-house." "Nevertheless," adds Spohr, in his report of the visit, "the letter of recommendation to Rothschild was not wholly useless, for he took a whole box at my benefit concert."*

Nathan Rothschild was a zealous money-maker to the last. His father had directed that the house of Rothschild should continue united from generation to generation. Each of the brothers had a share in all the others' concerns. It was in furtherance of the general scheme that, some time before, Nathan's youngest brother, James, had married one of his nieces. In 1836 it was resolved that Nathan's eldest son, Lionel, should marry one of his cousins, a daughter of Anselm Rothschild of Frankfort. With that object the father and son went to Frankfort in June. But on the wedding day Nathan fell ill. He died on the 28th of July, not quite sixty years of age. On the morning following his death one of his own carrier pigeons was shot near Brighton. When it was picked up there was found under one of its wings a scrap of paper, with these three words, 'Il est mort.'

None but his own kindred ever knew what was Rothschild's real wealth. The guesses ranged between three millions and ten. To his widow he left 20,000*l.* a year, with life interest in the house in Piccadilly and the estate of Gunnersbury. Each of his four sons had received 25,000*l.* on his becoming of age, and to each 75,000*l.* was to be given on his marriage. To his three daughters, besides 25,000*l.* apiece on their reaching the age of twenty-one, 100,000*l* was left, half as a wedding-present, half to remain in the business at four per cent. interest. "Their marriage, however,"

* Louis Spohr's *Autobiography* (London, 1865), vol. ii., p. 78.

it was characteristically ordered in his will, "can only at any time take place with the sanction of their mother or brothers; and in the event, which is not to be supposed, that in such respect they shall not be able mutually to agree, and their mother or brothers should refuse their consent, then shall my brothers decide thereon, and this decision is to be complied with unconditionally by all parties." If the daughters married without consent they were to lose everything.*

The Chief Rabbi,—in preaching the funeral sermon over a coffin 'so handsomely carved and decorated with large silver handles at both sides and ends, that it appeared more like a cabinet or splendid piece of furniture than a receptacle for the dead,'—applauded the charity of Nathan Meyer Rothschild, who, during his lifetime, had intrusted him with some thousands of pounds for secret almsgiving.† But that was all that the world ever heard of the rich man's use of his riches in any sort of disinterested charity, or in any way, which, whether it did good to others or not, was not chosen chiefly for his own entertainment or his own aggrandizement.

* *Annual Obituary* for 1836. † *Ibid.*

CHAPTER XXV.

THOMAS POTTER AND SOME OTHER MERCHANTS OF MANCHESTER.

[1764—1845.]

The history of Manchester during the last hundred years,—itself more than twenty times as large, and four hundred times as rich in 1860 as it had been in 1760, and the centre of a district nearly every former village of which has in the intervening century become a populous and wealthy town,—comprises the history of a dozen famous merchants of almost equal worth and eminence. If we single out Sir Thomas Potter from the group, and cluster round the story of his career so much as is necessary to be said about his contemporaries, it is rather because his long life covered nearly the whole period of greatest prosperity, and because his energy on political and municipal questions made him especially prominent, than because the other men were less notable or less helpful to the progress of Manchester commerce.

He was born at Wingate Hall, near Tadcaster, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in 1764. His father, John Potter, there owned a farm of some three hundred acres. He was a modest man, of no education or gentility, but shrewd, industrious, and honest. It is reported that for his known opposition to the English policy which issued in the American War of Independence, and for his refusal to join in the illuminations consequent on the victories of the English

troops over Washington, all his windows were, on one occasion, broken; but he generally troubled himself little about matters outside of his farm and family. In 1802 he received a silver cup as a prize for the best crop of turnips produced that year in the county of York. In other ways he acquired some fame for his good farming, and he succeeded thereby in saving some money, which was to prove very useful to his sons.

Of these there were three, William, Thomas, and Richard. William was sent, while a lad, to take a situation under a woollen manufacturer and wholesale draper in Wigan, and there he gave so much satisfaction to his employer that he was soon promoted to responsible and lucrative work. Thomas and Richard were at first, and for many years, occupied in managing the farm. Their leisure they used in the supervision of a small draper's shop, which John Potter had opened in Tadcaster, placing his daughters in it as saleswomen. Thomas, during many years, went periodically to fairs in the neighbourhood in search of the best stock for the farm, and every now and then he proceeded to Manchester, Leeds, and other towns, to make purchases for the draper's shop.

This general schooling of the family in a humble sort of trade issued, in due time, in a larger enterprise. In 1802 William and Richard opened a warehouse in Manchester—the precise locality being No. 5, Cannon Street—and a few months later arrangements were made for releasing Thomas also from attendance at the farm. On the 1st of January, 1803, the firm of William, Thomas, and Richard Potter was established, to be changed in 1806 into Thomas and Richard Potter, through the retirement of the elder brother. The capital, made up of all the family savings during half a century or more, with which the house began business in 1803, was estimated at £14,000. At that time, and for thirty years ensuing, its chief business lay in procuring from the neighbouring manufacturers grey, white, and dyed

calicoes, linens, flannels, fustians, counterpanes, and the like, for sale to the wholesale dealers in such centres of trade as London, Bristol, Exeter, and Norwich.*

That was a branch of commerce that the extension of Lancashire manufactures was rapidly bringing into importance. Nathan Rothschild, as we have seen, applied himself to it and thus obtained large profits during his few years' residence in Manchester. Many other bold adventurers, making Manchester their permanent home, and confining themselves to more legitimate walks of trade, pursued their ends with notable advantage both to themselves and to their town. Among them Samuel Watts and Henry Bannerman were only a little younger, and perhaps no whit less enterprising and successful, than the Potters.

Manchester, though even then a famous place, was, at the time of Thomas Potter's first settlement in it, small and insignificant in comparison with its present size and importance. In 1801 it and the adjoining township of Salford, contained 84,020 inhabitants: in 1861 the population had risen to 460,028. All the business of the town was carried on in the immediate neighbourhood of Market Place, with the old Parish Church, now the Cathedral, and Chetham's Hospital a little to the north. Deansgate, leading to the out-of-the-way suburb of Hulme, was the widest and finest thoroughfare, and Cannon Street the principal haunt, both for business and for residence, of the merchants. Saint Ann's Square, now the fashionable centre of the city, had but lately been built on the site of an old corn-field, known as Acre's Field. Other new squares and streets, with commodious houses, were being constructed at this time; but there were still to be seen whole streets in which all the buildings were of wood, clay, and

* *Leeds Mercury*, March 29, 1845; *Manchester Times*, March 22, 1845; *Manchester City News*, February 4, 1865. To the last-named journal I am indebted for a great many facts, drawn from two interesting series of papers on *Manchester Firms* and *The Workshops of Lancashire*, that have lately appeared in its columns. They are the result of careful research by a competent local authority.

plaster. Hardly anywhere were the pathways wide enough for two persons to walk abreast, and most of the roads, unpaved and rarely mended, were in such a condition that it was dangerous to walk along them at night without a lantern. Manchester then began to vie with London in the rapidity of its growth, and also, it was said in 1795, 'in the closeness with which the poor are crowded in offensive, dark, damp, and incommodious habitations.'*

The newest and the worst parts of Manchester were in the neighbourhoods of the great cotton-spinning and calico-printing works, which, bringing into the town great numbers of labourers who had to be housed in the cheapest way possible, were becoming the principal source of wealth to the town. In 1768 all Great Britain spent less than 200,000*l.* in buying and manufacturing cotton goods. In 1788 the trade was more than doubled, and large enough to give work to 26,000 men, 31,000 women, and 53,000 children, who were employed in spinning, and to 133,000 men, 59,000 women, and 48,000 children, employed in the later stages of manufacture; in all to 350,000 persons. Of the 142 water-mills which were used in these manufactures, 41 were in Lancashire, 22 in Derbyshire, and 8 in Cheshire; that is, just half were in the district of which Manchester was the centre. This growth of the cotton trade of course gave encouragement to all other branches of industry. A large business was done in fustians, and Manchester was famous, as of old, for its hats, and for its 'laces, inkles, tapes, and worsted small wares.' New trades were also made necessary by the requirements of the cotton-spinners. Iron manufacture was

* Aikin, *Country Round Manchester*, p. 192. "In 1790, a piece of ground, covering 2,400 square yards, situated near the junction of Piccadilly and Market Street, was purchased from Sir Oswald Mosley, lord of the manor, for about 400*l.* Twenty years afterwards, it was sold for 5,000*l.* A few years after this, it was again sold for 11,000*l.* The last purchaser divided it into two portions, of which he sold one for 8,000*l.*, and the other soon afterwards, for 17,500*l.*, making 25,500*l.* in all, or about sixty-fold on the original price."—*Land we Live in*, vol. i., p. 213.

begun at Salford, about 1770, by Bateman and Sharrard, who for some time supplied nearly all the wheels, cylinders, boilers, ovens, and the like, that were needed in the cotton-works. Besides the produce of their establishment, and besides the large supply of steam-engines and machinery that came from Boulton and Watt, in Birmingham, there was room, in 1795, for five other iron foundries in Manchester.*

The history of Manchester and the Manchester district, however, during Sir Thomas Potter's lifetime, was by no means one of even prosperity. The Blackburn Riots of 1779, when mobs of spinners and weavers destroyed all the spinning-jennies and other machines that they could find, were only one conspicuous illustration of a long and painful strife, in which some excuse can be found for the ignorant and short-sighted aversion entertained by the old hand-labourers to the new mechanical contrivances by which the trade to which they looked for support was being wonderfully helped on. And there were other and more blameworthy causes of dissension. Manchester has long been famous for its zealous participation in political controversies. Now looked upon as the head-quarters of the Radical party, it was, during a chief part of the eighteenth century, a favourite haunt of Toryism and Jacobinism. There were not many men unbiassed enough to say with the wise and witty Doctor Byrom, while Prince Charles Edward was lodging in 1745 at a place afterwards known as the Palace Inn, in Market Street,

> 'God bless the King—I mean our faith's Defender!'
> God bless (no harm in blessing) the Pretender!
> But who Pretender is, or who is King—
> God bless us all!—that's quite another thing.'

The Jacobites were followed by the Tories in the direction of Manchester affairs. No great difficulties arose, however, till near the time of the French Revolution. Then the

* Their proprietors were Brodie, M'Niven, and Ormrod; Smiths and Company; Bassett and Smith; John Smith; and Mrs. Phœbe Fletcher.—Aikin, pp. 176–178.

Tory hatred of democracy, which caused the prosecution of men like Horne Tooke and Leigh Hunt in London, led to a similar attack on Thomas Walker, the author of *The Original*, and other champions of civil and religious liberty in Manchester. Hence ensued much party-strife, the weak being persecuted by the strong, and thereby excited to an opposition they would not otherwise have thought of, and Manchester became the scene of a battle that has to some extent lasted to this day.

One great incentive to the contest was the part taken by England in the war with France. English workmen would not have troubled themselves much about the French Revolution or American politics had not the impetuosity of the war-makers brought upon them a famine that lasted for years. 'Old inhabitants, of the industrial classes shudder at the recollection of the sufferings endured in 1800 and 1801, when wheat, which, before the war, was at 6*s.* a bushel, had risen to 16*s.* 8*d.*, and the poor-rates which, at the commencement of the war, amounted to 2,167,748*l.*, had risen to an average of 5,300,000*l.*'* In 1812, Mr. Brougham, making report to the House of Commons concerning the financial and commercial results of the war, spoke of the misery that was everywhere apparent:—"Birmingham and its neighbourhood, a district of thirteen miles round that centre," he said, "was formerly but one village,—I might say, one continued workshop, peopled with about four hundred thousand of the most industrious and skilful of mankind. In what state do you now find that once busy hive of men? Silent, still, and desolate, during one half of the week; during the rest of it, miserably toiling at reduced wages, for a pittance scarcely sufficient to sustain animal life in the lowest state of comfort, and at all times swarming with unhappy persons, willing, anxious to work for their lives, but unable to find employment." Yet greater were the dis-

* Prentice, *Historical Sketches and Personal Recollections of Manchester* (Manchester, 1851), p. 26.

tresses of the poor in Manchester and the adjoining districts. "The food which now sustains them," said the same eloquent speaker, "is of the lowest kind, and of that there is not nearly a sufficient supply: bread, or even potatoes, are now out of the question; the luxuries of animal food, or even milk, they have long ceased to think of: their looks, as well as their apparel, proclaim the sad change in their situation. A gentleman largely concerned in the cotton-trade, whose property in part consists of cottages and little pieces of ground let out to workpeople, told us that lately he went to look after his rents; but when he entered those dwellings and found them so miserably altered, so stripped of their wonted furniture and other little comforts—when he saw their inhabitants sitting down to a scanty dinner of oatmeal and water, their only meal in the four and twenty hours—he could not stand the sight, and came away without asking for his money. Those feelings were not confined to that respectable witness. Masters came forward to tell us how unhappy it made them to have no more work to give their poor men, because all their money, and in some cases all their credit too, was already gone in trying to support them; some had involved themselves in embarrassments for such pious purposes. One, again, would describe his misery at turning off people whom he and his father had employed for many years; another would say how he dreaded the coming round of Saturday, when he had to pay his hands their reduced wages, insufficient to support them; how he kept out of their way on that day, and made his foreman pay them: while a third would say that he was afraid to see his people, because he had no longer the means of giving them work, and he knew that they would flock round him and beg to be employed for the lowest wages,—for wages wholly insufficient to feed them."*

Worse miseries than those befel the cotton operatives fifty years later; but the men who suffered most from the Lanca-

* Prentice, pp. 44–46.

shire Cotton Famine of 1862 and 1863 bravely and patiently met their misfortunes, knowing that there were none, in England at any rate, who could be blamed for them. It was otherwise in 1812 and the ensuing years. The people thought, and with reason, that most of their troubles might have been averted had the Tory advocates of war with France and America been restrained; and they gave violent utterance to their indignation. The Manchester Exchange Riot of 1812 was the signal for incendiarism in all the neighbouring districts. All moderate men deplored these measures; "but," as one who witnessed and sought to check them said, "we had no Church and King mobs after that!" Soon all Manchester became of one mind. Merchants and manufacturers, with some exceptions, joined with the labouring classes, and all worked together in furtherance of reform.

Their opponents gave them plenty of ground for fighting. Peace came in 1815, and with it might have returned commercial prosperity and abundance of food, with certain result in the contentment of the people. But in that year the Corn Bill was passed, forbidding the importation of wheat when the price was under 80*s.* a quarter, and thus securing for the landed aristocracy, and the wealthy farmers, relief from the burden of war taxes, at the cost of cruel sufferings to the poorer members of society. That measure caused wider dissatisfaction than the war policy had ever done, giving proof, as it did, of greater selfishness and more wanton contempt for the welfare of the people.

Nowhere did there appear a more notable body of champions of the people, champions also of English honour and commercial prosperity, than in Manchester. Old men like Robert Philips and Samuel Greg, Samuel Jackson, Thomas Preston, and Thomas Kershaw, leaders of the opposition that had for twenty years been offered to the war with France, joined with younger and yet bolder men, like John

* Prentice, p. 511

Edward Taylor and Joseph Brotherton, Thomas and Richard Potter, in forming and preserving through a quarter of a century what Richard Potter called "a small but determined band of free traders and reformers."*

In this band the Potters were most conspicuous of all. It was in a little parlour at the back of their Cannon Street counting-house, generally known as 'the plotting-parlour,' that nearly every movement in the long battle of reform was first talked over and resolved upon.† "Gentlemen," said Thomas Potter, at one of the early meetings, "I have not the talent for public business possessed by my brother Richard, but I promise you that I shall work in our business in order that he may devote himself freely to the protection of the oppressed."‡ In so saying he did scanty justice to his own abilities, but that was the arrangement observed for some years. Richard Potter applied himself almost exclusively to the political movements which the brothers had at heart; Thomas Potter, 'benevolent, strong of purpose, and energetic, always willing to aid the cause of reform, but taking little or no part in public questions,'§ took the entire management of the warehouse, and established in it the largest business to be found in Manchester. In 1830, the younger brother was elected Member of Parliament for Wigan, and thus had less time left for Manchester affairs. Thomas Potter then allowed himself to become more of a public man, and in so doing added to his own repute, and won everybody's favour. 'From that time forward,' it was said, 'there was not a single movement in Manchester, for general or local reform, for the promotion of education, for the relief of the poor, or for the improved administration of the town's affairs, in which Mr. Potter did not stand in the first rank, aiding with his always open purse, but more by his characteristic energy, we may almost say impetuosity, of character, which saw no obstacles, and permitted none to

* PRENTICE, pp. 73, 74. † *Manchester City News*, February 4, 1865.
‡ *Manchester Times*, March 22, 1845. § PRENTICE, p. 74.

be seen, to the fulfilment of any really good object, and which communicated itself to all with whom he had to act, stimulating the faint-hearted to hope, and rousing the phlegmatic to exertion.'*

The first business in which Thomas and Richard Potter took much part was political. The angry meetings that many of the working classes had held, in Manchester and elsewhere, for condemnation of the Corn Law and of the entire treatment they were receiving at the hands of the Tories, gave an excuse to Lord Liverpool's Government for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act and arresting, on the information of an organized set of spies, all who were suspected of sedition. Many honest men from Manchester, Samuel Bamford among them, were seized, conveyed to London in irons, and there imprisoned without trial. Noisy and self-styled philanthropists, like Wilberforce, supported this conduct; but truer friends of the people, with Brougham at their head, stoutly opposed it in the House of Commons. In Manchester it was loudly condemned by the Potters and their fellow-thinkers. The two brothers, and five and twenty other leading men in the town, sent up a petition to the House, showing how, if there was any sedition abroad, it had been induced by the policy of the Government; and that, on the other hand, with very few exceptions, 'the conduct of the labouring part of their fellow-townsmen did not exhibit the slightest tendency to insubordination or violence, while they had sustained an unparalleled extremity of distress with fortitude the most exemplary and heroic.' The petition led to a debate and a division in the House, but without success, a Bill of Indemnity being passed in favour of the spies and their employers in high places. Unsuccessful, also, was the little exercise of spite by which the names of the twenty-seven petitioners were printed on cards, to be hung up in counting-houses and shops, as names of men with whom no honest friend of King and State should allow himself to trade. The time had

* *Manchester Times*, March 22, 1845.

gone by for merchants to be injured in their business affairs by differences of political opinion. "In spite of all opposition," said Archibald Prentice, one of the offenders, "Shuttleworth and Taylor sold their cotton to men who could not buy it cheaper elsewhere, Thomas and Richard Potter their fustians, Brotherton and Harvey their yarns, Baxter his ginghams and shirtings, and I my fine Glasgow muslins."*

With one of the twenty-seven, persecution was attempted in another way. John Edward Taylor was brought into court in 1819 on a trumpery charge of libel, the real object being to punish him for his intrepid advocacy of Radical sentiments. After a long and unfair trial, in which the judge acted, for the nonce, as senior counsel for the plaintiff, he was acquitted. The result was so much increase of popularity, both to him and to his party, that, in 1821, twelve merchants met in the Potters' 'plotting parlour,' and formed a fund for starting the *Manchester Guardian*, under his editorship.† In 1824, the *Guardian* having failed to give just expression to their views on reform, an old paper was re-shaped, with Archibald Prentice as its editor, to appear first as the *Manchester Gazette*, then as the *Manchester Times and Gazette*, and subsequently as the *Manchester Examiner and Times*. This younger and bolder paper also mainly owed its origin to the influence of Thomas and Richard Potter.‡

In all sorts of other ways the brothers were zealous friends of the Radical cause. They were especially active in promotion of the Reform Bill. During the latter half of 1830, and all through the year 1831, they took the lead in calling several great meetings of the people, and addressing them on the subject in earnest and temperate language. A much larger meeting than any that had previously been held was appointed for the 10th of October, 1831, a week after Man-

* Prentice, pp. 123, 127, 131.
† Prentice, p. 202; *Manchester City News*, February 4, 1865.
‡ Prentice, p. 248.

chester had heard of the rejection of the Bill by the House of Peers. It was summoned 'to consider the propriety of presenting a dutiful and loyal address to his Majesty, for the purpose of assuring him of their devotion to his person, and of their unshaken determination to give to his Majesty and his Government all the support in their power; and also of imploring his Majesty to take such decisive constitutional proceedings as shall counteract the pernicious consequences which may result from the rejection of the Reform Bill by the House of Lords, secure the passing of that important measure into a law, and thus preserve the peace, and conduce to the future welfare of the country.' It was intended that the meeting should be held in a room in Lower Mosely Street; but so vast a crowd clamoured for admission that it was adjourned to Camp Field, and there Thomas Potter presided over an assemblage of a hundred thousand persons. His own speech was too moderate and conciliatory to give general satisfaction. Other speakers, rising from the vast crowd, advised measures more or less violent, and when the people were urged to support the men who were fighting their battles in Parliament, they shouted, "We'll fight our battles for ourselves." But Thomas Potter, and the other friends of order, succeeded in keeping them from any such expression of anger as appeared in the Bristol Riots and the destruction of Nottingham Castle.

The Manchester reformers wisely confined themselves to eager speech and unfulfilled threats. In the time of greatest excitement, we are told, 'the shopkeepers left their places of business and ran about asking, "What's to be done now?" The working classes, in every district of the town, gathered into little knots, and, with curses both loud and deep, expressed their hatred of the faction whose intrigues had prevailed over the voice of twenty-four millions of people.' But that was the limit of their incendiarism.

The world had proof, however, of the interest shown in Manchester on the subject of reform. On its being reported

in the town that the Ministers had resigned office and abandoned the cause they had promised to support, a meeting was straightway convened in the Town Hall. Then it was resolved, without delay, to send an urgent petition to the House of Commons, begging, 'that as the people had been twice denied their birthright by the endeavours of a small number of interested individuals,' no supplies might be voted, 'until a measure essential to the happiness of the people and the safety of the throne should be carried into a law.' At one o'clock the petition was drafted; at three the sheets were distributed for signature; at six o'clock they were returned with twenty-four thousand names attached to them. Without loss of a minute, a deputation, consisting of Richard Potter and two other merchants, posted to London, making the journey in seventeen hours, notwithstanding the considerable time spent in halting on the road. 'At every town and village they distributed a short account of the meeting and the petition; and as they approached London, copies of the petition were distributed to the passengers of the numerous coaches they met, so that in the course of that day intelligence of the Manchester meeting was spread throughout the greater part of the kingdom.' Thus the monster protest from Manchester was promptly followed by numberless other petitions to the same effect. In less than a month the Reform Bill became law, and Manchester had a share in the Parliamentary representation.*

His fellow-townsmen were not slow in acknowledging their debt to Thomas Potter for the share taken by him in this battle. He was also prominent and influential in the later contest, yet more famous in the annals of Manchester than the struggle for Reform, which led to the repeal of the Corn-Laws in 1846. He did not live to see its termination, and, during the time of most zealous fighting, his age, and his other avocations, prevented him from taking as active a share in the work as he had done in former years. Younger, and more eloquent

* PRENTICE, pp. 397–417.

men, with Richard Cobden at their head, were the chief promoters of that greatest of all benefits to English commerce.

But to the end of his life Thomas Potter was the acknowledged head of the movement in Manchester. He was a member of the provisional committee appointed in October, 1838, to form the Anti-Corn-Law Association, soon changed to the Anti-Corn-Law League. He was one of the first, largest, and most persistent subscribers to the fund necessary to keep it alive. He marched at the head of the processions that, passing up and down the streets of Manchester, drew a crowd of curious observers from every part of England, and, albeit with something of clap-trap, thus helped to rouse interest in the subject. He gave hearty encouragement, by word and with money, to the Free Trade Hall set up in Saint Peter's Field. In every way, and to the utmost of his power, he aided the League with his most strenuous and influential support, up to the time when its head-quarters were in London and its ramifications in every part of England.*

There was another work in which Manchester was specially interested, contemporary with the early action of the Anti-Corn-Law League, to which Thomas Potter devoted himself. Over and over again the reformers of Manchester had been hindered in their work by the old-fashioned way in which the municipal affairs of the town were directed by a borough reeve. In 1828 the Tories, hoping thus to check the progress of liberalism, applied for an Act of Parliament, directing that no one should have a vote in the election of Police Commissioners unless he was assessed at a rental of 25*l.* a year, and that none should be eligible for the office itself whose house was valued at less than 40*l.* a year. Thomas Potter was leader of the opposition offered to that project, and claimed the right both of voting and of candidature for all rate-payers. Therein he did not succeed, and Parliament fixed the respective qualifications at 16*l* and 28*l.*

* Prentice, *History of the Anti-Corn-Law League* (London, 1853), vol. i., pp. 73, 92, 97, 126, 128, 200, 217, &c.

So great was the dissatisfaction caused by that compromise that, after the all-absorbing question of Parliamentary Reform had been settled for a generation, and Manchester had received a part of its due by being made a Parliamentary borough, Potter and his fellow-workers returned to the municipal battle. After two or three years of preliminary agitation, a committee, with William Neild for chairman, was appointed in February, 1838, to present a petition to the Queen in Council, praying for a charter of incorporation. The answer to the petition was given in the following October and December. Thomas Potter was elected first Mayor of Manchester. 'The appointment of Mr. Potter,' it was said at the time, 'must be peculiarly gratifying to all who have witnessed his long, consistent, and energetic labours to promote the political and moral improvement of his fellow-men and the munificent use, directed by an enlightened and ever-active benevolence, he has made of the large means which a life of industry and integrity has placed at his disposal.' It was not peculiarly gratifying to the Tories. They urged that the incorporation of Manchester was opposed to the wishes of a majority of the inhabitants, and that it would entail upon them additional and unnecessary expenses, and therefore they raised a fund of 12,000*l.* to be spent in trying to upset the charter. The Liberals controverted their statements, and collected about 30,000*l.* for protection of the advantages they had already obtained for the town. Litigation followed, rates were refused in certain wards, and all sorts of difficulties were put in the way of the newly-appointed Mayor, Aldermen, and Councilmen. These, however, were all overcome, and soon every one admitted that Potter had done good service to the town by his share in procuring its municipal charter. He was re-elected Mayor in 1839, and on that occasion received the honour of knighthood.*

* *Manchester Gazette*, October 27, November 3, 10, 17; December 1, 8, 15, 22, 1838; *Manchester Times*, March 22, 1845.

Full of zeal for the municipal and political advancement of Manchester, Sir Thomas Potter was no less philanthropic in other ways. His powerful speech and his well-filled purse were freely used in furtherance of every good and charitable work. In 1818, with the co-operation of his wife, a daughter of Thomas Bayley, of Booth Hall, he set up, at Irlams-o'-the-Height, a school in which some seventy or eighty poor girls were to be suitably educated, and enabled to make a living for themselves as servants or factory-workers; an institution cared for, after the old man's death, by his son, Mr. Thomas Bayley Potter.*

Sir Thomas was the leader in a much more important educational movement. 'The Grammar School at Manchester,' established early in the sixteenth century, 'with funds to the amount of 4,000*l.* a year, had long given instruction to only about two hundred boys; and that not gratuitously, for every branch of education, beyond what, in the old parlance, was called grammar, was charged for at a high rate. Sir Thomas Potter and Mr. Mark Philips, at their sole expense, made application to Chancery and obtained an order, under which the number of pupils has been more than doubled,' it was said in 1845, 'and they are taught, without charge, not only grammar, but writing, arithmetic, mathematics, drawing, and several of the modern languages.'† In juvenile reformatories he always took great interest, and he was engaged in correspondence thereon, with a view to the establishment of one in Manchester, almost to the last day of his life.‡

He died on the 20th of March, 1845, at his house on Brick Hill, near Manchester.§ His brother Richard had died at Penzance two years before. He left two sons, who

* *Manchester City News*, February 4, 1865.
† *Manchester Times*, March 22, 1845.
‡ *Manchester City News*, February 4, 1865.
§ *Manchester Times*.

heartily applied themselves to the furtherance of the objects he had chiefly at heart, steady friends of political and municipal freedom, of education and social improvement. Sir John Potter, the elder of them, who died in 1857, was thrice Mayor of Manchester, and the chief promoter of the Manchester Free Library. Mr. Thomas Bayley Potter, the younger son, was the intimate friend of Richard Cobden, whom he succeeded as Member of Parliament for Rochdale in 1865. Both entered the mercantile house, and helped to increase its importance, during their father's lifetime; aiding it still more from the time when they became senior partners in 1845.

In 1830, Mr. S. H. Norris had been admitted to a share in the business, which, in 1836, had been transferred from its original house in Cannon Street to No. 1, George Street. Before that time, George Street, Mosely Street, and Portland Street, now crowded with immense warehouses and the busiest resort of Manchester merchants, contained nothing but dwelling-houses and shops. Thomas Potter was laughed at for taking his business out of town, beyond the reach, as it was thought, of the customers who frequented Cannon Street and High Street. In building his new warehouse in the new neighbourhood, however, he set a fashion which has done much for the architectural improvement of Manchester, as well as for the extension of its commerce. In Cannon Street he had chiefly traded with the wholesale dealers of London and the great towns of England, in Lancashire cottons and fustians, and Yorkshire linens and flannels. In George Street, while extending these old branches of business, he added to them a rapidly increasing trade in silks, ribbons, hosiery, merinoes, and all sorts of haberdashery and small wares; and besides the shipment of these articles to foreign countries, opportunity was found for immediate dealings with the shopkeepers of Great Britain. In 1864, 'the firm had from five to six thousand customers spread all over the country, from John-o'-Groat's

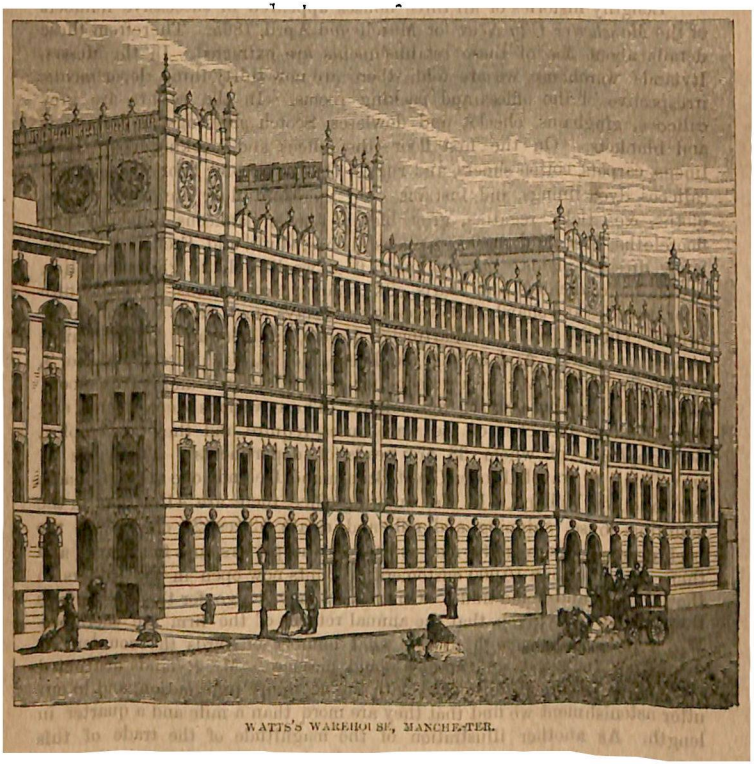
to Land's End, and twenty travellers were employed to visit these customers periodically.'*

A shrewd and observant foreigner visited the warehouse in 1843. 'It is a great building six storeys high,' he said, 'the upper floors of which are occupied by the lighter, and the lower by the heavier goods. As the great quantities of cotton and woollen goods perpetually traversing Manchester, between the different spinning, weaving, bleaching, dyeing, printing, and exporting establishments, could not be conveyed by the ordinary means without great loss of time and trouble, a kind of conveyance, called vans, has been lately introduced, consisting of enormous square, watertight boxes, placed on springs and wheels, which are capable of conveying immense masses of goods in a comparatively small compass and short space of time. At the great warehouses, like that of Messrs. Potter, machines called steam hoists are used for raising the goods into the vans. These little steam-engines stand on the ground floor, and raise great bales of goods with extraordinary ease and celerity. Besides this steam-engine, no less than fifty workmen are constantly employed in the warehouse in packing and unpacking the bales. Every country has its particular partialities in the goods it purchases, and the speculating merchant must always be well acquainted with these, no less than with the real wants and customs of each nation. From the Manchester warehouses great quantities of black cloth are annually sent to Italy, to clothe the innumerable priests of that country. But this black cloth must always be of a particular coal-black, without the slightest tinge of brown or blue. Goods must also be packed differently for different nations; thus, at Messrs. Potters, I saw bales of cotton, intended for China, packed in the Chinese manner and decorated with bright, tasteful little pictures, representing Chinese customs, ceremonies, costumes, and the like. Nor must the manner of transport used in the interior of the countries for which they are in-

* *Manchester City News*. February 4, 1865.

tended be forgotten in the packing of the goods. Wares to be carried on the backs of elephants, camels, or llamas, must be differently packed from those to be conveyed by waggons, canals, or railways.'*

In 1843 the Potters' establishment was the largest and most influential of some three hundred and sixty mercantile houses that at that time were scattered over Manchester.† In the ensuing twenty years the number of warehouses has been more than quadrupled, and several of their owners, profiting by the wonderful example of energy and tact in



WATTS'S WAREHOUSE, MANCHESTER.

* J. G. Kohl, *England and Wales* (London, 1844), pp. 126, 127.

† *Ibid.*, p. 126.

studying the wants of all the markets of the world that was set by Sir Thomas Potter, have gained a place equal, if not superior, to that of the older house of which he was the head. Among these establishments, perhaps the most famous of all, for domestic trade at any rate, are those conducted by Messrs. S. and J. Watts and Company, in the handsomest mercantile building to be found in Manchester; by Messrs. Rylands and Sons, and by Messrs. Henry Bannerman and Sons.*

* Lengthy histories of all three houses appeared in successive numbers of the *Manchester City News* for March and April, 1865. Therefrom these details about one of these establishments are extracted. In the Messrs. Rylands' warehouse, we are told, 'there are now thirty-three departments, irrespective of the offices and packing rooms. In the cellars are grey calicoes, ginghams, checks, and dowlases, Scotch sheetings, and flannels and blankets. On the first floor—the offices and packing-room—Irish linens, carpets, cotton sheets, and rugs. On the second floor are bleached calicoes, dyed linings, and fustians. On the third floor are table covers, cloths, &c., ticks, regattas, grey bleach linens, nankeens, oilcloths and floorcloths, French damasks, moreens, llamas, stuffs, and French merinoes, fancy dresses, plaids. On the *fourth* floor, woollen cloths, gloves, muslins, cotton handkerchiefs and skirts, silks, crapes, lace, ribbons. On the fifth floor, mantles and shawls, haberdashery and stays, small wares and umbrellas, prints. On the sixth floor, artificial flowers, millinery and underclothing, straws and furs. And at the warehouse, No. 16, High Street, and No. 3, Bread Street, are the departments for hosiery, worsted and yarns, boots, shoes, and overshoes, shirts and collars. These various departments, and the collateral branches of the warehouses, require, and they now employ, 600 *employés*, of whom 33 are heads of departments. There are 21 travellers; 19 travel all over Great Britain and Ireland, one takes Canada, and another Holland. In the entering-office there are 41 clerks; in the counting-house, shipping and mill and estate offices, 28 clerks. In the packing-room, there are 34 men as packers and porters, and four boys; and there are more than 10,000 customers' accounts now open in the ledgers in the shipping and home trade. Our readers may judge for themselves from the facts we have given, that the annual returns of the firm are enormous. We were curious enough to ask what number of yards the counters for displaying the goods or samples would measure. Mr. Rylands instructed one of his joiners to furnish us with the necessary information, and to our utter astonishment we find that they are more than a mile and a quarter in length. As another illustration of the magnitude of the trade of this concern, we may name that in one article alone—viz., calicoes in the grey and finished state, they sell as many yards per annum, we find, by calculations of our own, as would form a girdle once round our planet, and provide,

Yet greater than any of these, however, from a strictly mercantile point of view, is the commercial house of Messrs. A. and S. Henry and Company. It owes its origin to the enterprise of an Alexander Henry, an Irishman, born in 1766, who emigrated to America in 1783. He was for a few years clerk in a merchant's office in Philadelphia. There he started business in his own name and on his own account, prospering sufficiently, during fifteen or sixteen years, to be able, in 1807, to retire from trade. He died in 1817; and his friends said of him, that 'his long life had been a continued exercise of benevolence, and the sanctity of a bright religious faith ennobled his motives, while it gave a wise direction to his actions.' While he was in business, one of his nephews, also named Alexander Henry, was sent over to him from Ireland. The lad profited by the commercial teaching of his uncle. In 1804 he crossed the Atlantic again, to establish a sort of agency for the Philadelphia house, in Palace Street, Manchester. Thence he soon removed to larger premises in Spear Street, and finally, in 1833, he took up his quarters in Portland Street, there constructing a house, great in the first instance, and subsequently enlarged in accordance with his growing wants. In Manchester he had his younger brother, Samuel Henry, for a partner. He also opened other mercantile establishments, with other partners in each case, in Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Glasgow, and Belfast. Himself the head of all these houses, he was

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besides, a good shirt for the whole of the male population of Great Britain and Ireland annually. And if this quantity of calicoes were all made into shirts, it would annually provide one shirt for every member of the male population of Great Britain and Ireland, France, and the United States. A very large portion of the shirts, collars, mantles, crinolines, black crape, bonnets, &c. (for which bonnets, we understand, the firm have a deserved celebrity) are made on the premises. All the printed circulars, price lists, &c., are printed in the warehouse; and all the pattern cards they manufacture themselves. There are three steam-engines and a ten-horse boiler in the warehouse. One steam-engine works the hoist, another the packing presses, and the third sets the sewing machines constantly going.'—*Manchester City News*, April 15, 1865.

thus able to purchase on the spot all the varieties of British textile manufactures, and he organized a wonderful machinery for selling them in every quarter of the world. He had agencies 'in all the chief cities of the United States, in Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, in Montreal and Quebec, in the British West Indian Islands, in Cuba, Mexico, and all the states of South America, in California, the Philippine Islands, China, Batavia, the East Indies, Australia, Egypt, and Turkey, on the African and European shores of the Mediterranean Sea, in Italy, Portugal, Spain; and northern Europe.'*

Alexander Henry was a wise, honest, and very prosperous merchant; but not much more than a merchant. His wealth procured for him election as Member of Parliament for South Lancashire; and he used some portion of his wealth in support of the Anti-Corn-Law League and other political movements, as well as in subscriptions to various benevolent institutions. But he is hardly entitled to high rank among the philanthropists and the true merchant-princes of Manchester.

These came, not only, like Sir Thomas Potter and George William Wood—a man to whom Manchester owes almost as much as to Sir Thomas Potter, though his work ran in quieter ways†—from the strictly mercantile classes, but also from

* For the materials of the foregoing paragraph I am indebted to Mr. SMILES, who has also very kindly placed at my disposal numerous notes and extracts made by him concerning William Brown of Liverpool and Titus Salt of Bradford.

† George William Wood was born at Leeds in 1781, his father being the Reverend William Wood, who succeeded Priestley as minister of Mill Hill Chapel, in that town, and did much for the advancement of literary and scientific tastes, political wisdom, and social refinement, among the many over whom he had influence. At the age of twenty, the son removed to Manchester, there in course of time to become a leading merchant, in partnership with Mark Philips. He was also a member of the firm of Oates, Wood, and Smithson, cloth-merchants, of Leeds. It is said on his monument in Upper Brook Street Chapel, Manchester, that 'having early in life engaged in commercial pursuits, and obtained by them an honourable independence, he quitted the pursuits of wealth for the nobler objects of public usefulness.' The praise was not idle. He vied with Sir Thomas Potter in his devotion to the municipal interests of Manchester, and he was

the manufacturing community for which Manchester and its neighbourhood have been, during the last hundred years,

a zealous supporter of all the Reform movements of the times. He was Member of Parliament for South Lancashire, at the first election following the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832. At the next election he was defeated; but in 1837, and again in 1841, he was chosen by the electors of Kendal. He died suddenly in October, 1843, while attending a meeting of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, which he had been influential in forming. At the time of his death he was magistrate and deputy-lieutenant for the county palatine of Lancaster, and president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce.—*Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1844, p. 204; and TAYLOR, *Biographia Leodiensis*, pp. 232, 401, 402. 'When I visit Manchester,' said Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, at the opening of the Manchester Art-Workman's Exhibition, on the 26th of February, 1866, 'I reflect for how much of the great municipal improvements of this city we are indebted to the anxious, persevering, and self-denying labours of one whose memory, I venture to say, seems to me in too much danger of being neglected and forgotten. Mr. George William Wood was, in my early youth, the pioneer of our municipal improvement. He found this city a great village, in almost a chaotic state of administration, with a population which had rapidly grown towards its present dimensions, but without institutions suited to the progress of its numbers, and what ought to have been its progress in civilization; and with devoted friends around him, such as your late Alderman Neild, Mr. Henry Newberry, who still survives and Mr. Henry Tootal, aided likewise by the great public spirit of the late Sir Thomas Potter, his brother Mr. Richard Potter, and Mr. Alderman Shuttleworth, Mr. Wood, as the leader of a moderate, intelligent, and conscientious party, laboured for years, amidst almost insurmountable difficulties, to found the system of municipal administration which has triumphed in this town. I cannot look upon the great avenues of commerce which have been opened through the centres of this city without reflecting how difficult it was to obtain the revenue for those improvements by the establishment of your gas-works, without whose profits Market Street would have still existed only in the condition of Market Street Lane, and the avenue from Broughton, past Hunt's Bank, would not have existed at all; nor can I forget that for these improvements, for the origination of improved sanitary arrangements, for your representation in Parliament, for your municipal incorporation, for your increased security of property, health, and comforts among all classes of the community, you are indebted to pioneers whose remembrance may be fading from the minds of this generation; and foremost among them, in my humble opinion, was Mr. George William Wood. He did not attract to himself the sympathies of the more advanced Liberal party, for he was very moderate in his political opinions, but he was the earnest advocate of all those national reforms which have received the sanction of Parliament.'—*Manchester Examiner and Times*, February 27, 1866.

still more famous. All the world knows the portrait of the Brothers Grant in *Nicholas Nickleby*, there termed the Brothers Cheeryble; and scores of others, less modest and reticent, have made for themselves as great a fame, without the aid of fiction.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JOHN GLADSTONE AND WILLIAM BROWN OF LIVERPOOL.

[1764-1864.]

LIVERPOOL emerged from the obscurity in which it lay for centuries as a seaside village by help of the tobacco trade, with Sir Thomas Johnson, the Norrises, and the Claytons for its leaders. A second period of development was coincident with the African slave trade, in which the Cunliffes and the Heywoods, the older Blundells, and the older Earles were conspicuous among a crowd of famous merchants. Much larger has been the crowd and much greater the aggregate fame in the third period of advancement, during which the American cotton trade, leading to an opening up of trade with India, and to all sorts of other commercial advantages, has made Liverpool not only the great channel through which Manchester and the Manchester district receive their raw materials and send forth their manufactured goods to all parts of the world, but, after London, the greatest port in Europe.

Cotton had been brought from the east, to be worked up in Manchester and the adjoining towns, long before the western trade began, and it was imported from the West Indies some thirty years before there was any considerable shipment from the American continent. Dated the 3rd of November, 1758, is this advertisement in a newspaper of the time: 'To be sold by auction, at Forbes and Campbell's sale-room, near the Exchange, this day, at one o'clock, twenty-five

bags of Jamaica cotton, in five lots.'* From that year cotton was regularly brought from the West Indies. In 1770 the Liverpool importations include 6,030 bales of cotton from 'the West India Islands and foreign countries, with the addition of three bales from New York, three bags from Georgia, four from Virginia and Maryland, and three barrels from North Carolina.'† It is said that as late as 1784, when eight bags of cotton were brought by an American vessel into Liverpool, they were seized by the custom-house officer as a contraband commodity 'such as was never known to be grown in America; and when those eight bales were admitted into Liverpool, we are told, they caused such a glut in the market that William Rathbone, to whom they were consigned, found great difficulty in disposing of them.‡ That report, however, is hardly credible, seeing that already Liverpool, thanks to the enterprise of young men like Rathbone, and old and influential merchants like the Earles, had already made a fair beginning of its cotton trade. In 1791, 68,404 bales were brought into the town; just half being consignments from Portugal, and 25,777 the produce of the British West Indies, while 64 bales came from America. But by 1796 the American imports had risen to 4,668 bales, the West Indian supply being 25,110, and the Portuguese being reduced to 30,721, with a total from all parts of 63,526 bales. From that time the cotton trade has grown with wonderful rapidity, nearly all the benefit of the growth being confined to the new and almost boundless American market.

Other commodities were then, however, and for some years to come, the staples of Liverpool commerce. The African trade flourished, and was a principal source of wealth, up to the time of its suppression in 1807, after long and eloquent opposition, begun forty years before by Thomas Bentley, and

* *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Historical Society* (Liverpool), vol. vi., p. 115.

† Enfield, *History of Liverpool.*

‡ *Transactions*, &c., vol. iv., p. 43.

subsequently carried on by other Unitarians, like Priestley, Yates, and Currie; by the Quakers, with William Rathbone at their head, and most eloquently of all by Rathbone's friend, William Roscoe, the Liverpool attorney and the world-famous critic and historian. There were larger importations of sugar, rum, and coffee than of cotton, moreover, from the West Indies and America, and greater still at that time was the trade in corn which Liverpool carried on with Canada and other parts. When the Goree Warehouses, then considered the most wonderful piece of commercial architecture in England, were burnt down in 1802, the loss was reckoned at 120,000*l.*'s worth of grain, 68,500*l.*'s worth of sugar, 30,000*l.*'s worth of cotton, besides sundries valued at 60,000*l.* These figures fairly illustrate the proportions of Liverpool trade at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

It was as a corn merchant that Sir John Gladstone began life in Liverpool. He was descended from the old Gladstanes of Lanarkshire, his grandfather being John Gladstones of Biggar, in that county. His father, Thomas Gladstones, who died in 1809, was for many years an influential corn and flour merchant and shipowner in Leith, with business very similar to that of the old Couttses of Edinburgh. At Leith John Gladstone * was born on the 11th of December, 1764, and there he received all his school education, as well as his early commercial training. For a few years he took an active share in the management of his father's business. He went several times to the Baltic in order to buy corn, and a like business took him once or twice to America, where he was the agent to Sir Claude Scott; 'and in these voyages,' it is said, 'he gave indications of that judicious management which was so amply exemplified in his future career.'†

In 1787, almost as soon as he became of age, he settled

* He was John Gladstones till the 10th of February, 1835, when he dropped the final *s* by royal license, and became John Gladstone.

† *Liverpool Courier*, December 17, 1851.

in Liverpool, as partner in the house of Currie, Bradshaw, and Company, corn merchants, bringing the training and the connections that he had acquired under his father to the advancement of his new business during sixteen years. In 1802, on the termination of his partnership, he established himself as a general merchant, then founding a commercial house which he himself was to manage with notable success during nearly thirty years, and which was to be no less famous and prosperous in the hands of his successors.*

He had to compete with and to surpass a number of great merchants and promoters of Liverpool commerce. Of these, perhaps, the most conspicuous as merchant philanthropists were James Cropper and William Rathbone. Rathbone died in 1809, leaving, as his friend Roscoe said, 'a name which will ever be distinguished by independence, probity, and true benevolence, and will remain as an example to his descendants of genuine piety and patient resignation, and of all those virtues which give energy to a community, adorn society, and are the delight of private life.'† Cropper lived till 1840. 'The great features of his character,' according to the judgment of his townsmen, 'were sound sense, perseverance, and benevolence. By these qualities he raised himself to wealth and influence in Liverpool, and entitled himself to the respect of all who knew him, and to the gratitude of thousands who never saw his face. The principal objects with which his name was connected were the repeal of the Orders in Council, the opening of the trade to India and China, and the abolition of negro slavery. He also took an active part, along with others, in introducing the railway system. He was for many years at the head of the well-known firm of Cropper, Benson, and Company. During the last years of his life he devoted himself almost entirely to works of benevolence, one of the most interesting of which was an orphan school at Fernhead, near Warrington, which he founded and superintended to the time of his death.'‡

* BAINES, *Liverpool*, p. 608. † *Ibid.*, p. 538. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 658.

Yet greater, as monied men, were Thomas Leyland and William Ewart. Ewart, the son of a Dumfries minister, had been brought up in the establishment of Sir George Dunbar; and when his employer retired from business, he and one of his fellow clerks succeeded to it as heads of the house of Ewart and Rutson, for upwards of twenty years the richest and most influential of any that were engaged in American commerce. William Ewart died in October, 1823, after many years' intimate friendship with Gladstone—one result of which appears in the name of the most famous of Gladstone's sons.* Thomas Leyland was his most remarkable contemporary in commercial Liverpool. He too, was altogether a self-made man, working his way up, by persistent exercise of his talents, from a humble station to the possession and, in his own way, the enjoyment of immense wealth. For many years he was a thriving merchant, for many more a thriving banker, William Roscoe being his partner in that capacity for a few years.† In 1793 he was one of a committee appointed to consider the best means of restoring confidence in Liverpool after the French Revolution; and in 1798 he contributed 300*l.* to the Tory fund towards the support of the Government in prosecution of its war with France.‡ He was Bailiff of Liverpool in 1796; Mayor in 1788, 1814, and 1820. At his death he left the chief part of his great fortune to his partner, Richard Bullin, who asumed his name and became, in his day, the richest man in Liverpool. He,

* Smithers, *History of Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1825), p. 437; *Liverpool a Few Years Since*, by an Old Stager [the Rev. James Aspinall] (Liverpool, 1852, pp. 47, 49.

† 'He was,' we are told, 'a man of amazing shrewdness, sagacity, and prudence. When the north countryman was asked for the receipt of his ale, which was always good, he answered, "There's just a way of doing it, man," and so it was with Mr. Leyland. He had "just a way of doing" things. By some intuition, instinct, or presentiment, call it what you will, he seemed always to have a warning of any coming storm in the money-market, and trimmed and steered the ship, and took in sail accordingly.'—*Liverpool a Few Years Since*, p. 39.

‡ Baines, pp. 494, 503.

dying in his turn in 1844, handed to his brother Charles, on the day previous to his death, a cheque for 1,000,000*l.*, thus cleverly mulcting the Exchequer of the legacy duty to which it would have been entitled had the money been left by will.*

John Gladstone took no active part in the municipal affairs of Liverpool, but he was a zealous politician, and his name appears in connection with nearly every commercial and philanthropic movement in the town for about the first forty years of the nineteenth century. He was one of the proprietors—Thomas Leyland being a trustee and William Ewart a director—of the Saint George's Fire Office, which was started in June, 1802, with a capital of 300,000*l.*, and nearly ruined by the burning, three months later, of the Goree Warehouses, which had been insured in it for 323,000*l.*† But Gladstone was rich enough to bear his part of the burthen. Having entered upon his new business in that year, he embarked at once in very extensive traffic in corn, cotton, and nearly every other commodity obtained from America and the West Indies. He does not appear to have had any share in the slave-trade, but in 1808, shortly after its abolition, he became a West Indian proprietor, having, especially, large estates in Jamaica, and drawing from them a good part of the sugar and rum which he sold to his customers at home. He had also much property in Demerara, near the district which, in 1824, became conspicuous as the scene of the insurrection in which the missionary Smith was implicated; and thereby he suffered very serious loss.‡

From first to last he was a zealous Tory; but in 1808 he, with others of his party, joined the Liberals in opposition to the Orders in Council, which, after grievously affecting the trade of England with America, led to the second Ameri-

* *Liverpool Albion*, December 9, 1844; *Gentleman's Magazine* (New Series), vol. xxiii., pp. 104, 665.

† Baines, p. 510.

‡ Corry, *History of Lancashire* (London, 1825), vol. ii., p. 699; *Liverpool Courier*, December 17, 1851.

can war. On the 26th of February, in consequence of a requisition signed by Gladstone, Ewart, and others, a meeting was held in which all parties, without regard to political bias, were associated in resistance to the Government policy.* Their protest, like all the others that came from various parts of the kingdom, was in vain, and the people were thrown into serious and needless misery. In 1809 the prices of food were so high, being twice as heavy as they had been a few years before, that other meetings were held to prevent the use of grain in distilling operations. In some of them Gladstone took a leading part.† He was also conspicuous in the measures taken in Liverpool to protect the interests of the merchants and lessen the disasters incident to the whole community through the commercial failures that were being caused by the American complications. Temporary relief was given to Liverpool commerce in 1809, by the opening of trade with Spain and Portugal, and their colonies in America. Goods of all sorts were shipped thither, especially to the South American provinces, in vast quantities. But in that way the price of commodities at home was further increased, and yet greater trouble ensued when the speculating merchants found that nothing came of their adventures. The year 1810 closed amid general panic, and the early months of 1811 were marked by terrible sufferings among all but the richest and most prudent inhabitants. Gladstone did all he could to lessen it, and it was mainly through the agitation in which he shared that part of a loan voted in Parliament for the relief of trade was assigned to Liverpool, and—a much more helpful measure—that in 1812 the ruinous Orders in Council were suspended.‡ This suspension was a few weeks too late to prevent war with America; but actual war proved better for trade than persistent war policy without fighting, and after a few years the trade of Liverpool and of all England was in a more prosperous state than it had ever been before.

* Baines, pp. 528–532. † *Ibid.*, pp 542, 546. ‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 544, 548.

John Gladstone's share in that good ending of the troubles must not be forgotten. Throughout the times of panic and distress he had never lost confidence in the stability of Liverpool commerce. On the 4th of August, 1808, the Corn Exchange in Brunswick Street, which he had been influential in procuring, was opened, and in 1809 the West India Association was organized, with him for chairman.* Through 1808 and 1809 he was zealous in his advocacy of further dock extension and custom-house accommodation, the result being an Act of Parliament obtained in 1811 for building the Brunswick Dock, for converting the Dry Dock into a Wet Dock, for constructing the Queen's Half-Tide Dock, and for filling up the Old Dock, built in the time of Sir Thomas Johnson, to make room for the new Custom-House.†

But by far the most important measure in which at this period he took part was the agitation for removal of the East India Company's monopoly. In 1794, in spite of the opposition raised by Burke and others, the Company's charter had been renewed for twenty years. In 1812, when that term had nearly expired, the question was revived. Gladstone took the lead in Liverpool, others working in conjunction with him in other towns, and the result was the passing of an Act, in 1813, throwing open to the general public all the Company's monopoly, except trade with China, and trade in tea with all places between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan. Liverpool at once took advantage of this change, and on the 22nd of May, 1814, Gladstone's ship, the *Kingsmill*, was despatched to the East Indies. It returned, laden with cotton, sugar, indigo, choice woods, and spices, in September, 1815.‡ That was the beginning of Liverpool's participation in the East India trade, second only, as a source of profit, to its commerce with America.

There was another monopoly, nearer home, which Gladstone joined, a few years afterwards, in overthrowing. The

* Baines, p. 537. † *Ibid.*, pp. 539, 541.

‡ *Liverpool Courier*, December 17, 1851; Baines, p. 569.

East India Company had been an institution altogether helpful to English commerce during the early stages of its history. So the Bridgewater Canal, constructed by Brindley in 1773, had been of incalculable benefit to Liverpool, Manchester, and the other towns with which it had been connected. But it too, growing rich through the commercial energy that it encouraged, became in a way obstructive. Having formed an alliance with the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, its managers desired to continue in exclusive possession of the traffic between Liverpool and Manchester, notwithstanding its inability to do all the work intrusted to it. The result was, as Huskisson complained in the House of Commons, that 'cotton was sometimes detained a fortnight in Liverpool, while the Manchester manufacturers were obliged to suspend their labours; and goods manufactured at Manchester for foreign markets could not be transmitted in time, in consequence of the tardy conveyance.' That was a grievance felt by all the merchants of both towns, except those who, as canal-proprietors, received ample recompense for their personal losses in the large profits derived from the carrying business. At last, in 1820, a Mr. Sanders, an enterprising merchant of Liverpool, resolved to see whether a tramroad could not be laid down. Having started the idea, others joined with him in its prosecution. The result was the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, begun in June, 1826, after tedious battling with prejudices and rival interests, both in Parliament and in the districts specially affected, and opened on the 15th of September, 1830.*

Preparatory to the obtaining of an Act of Parliament sanctioning the enterprise, two Liverpool merchants were examined by a Committee of the House of Commons, on the 21st of March, 1825. One of them was John Gladstone. He had been a merchant of Liverpool for eight-and-thirty years.

* BAINES, pp. 599–612. Very full histories of the enterprise appear in Mr. SMILES's *Lives of the Engineers*, Mr. JEAFFRESON's *Life of Robert Stephenson*, and elsewhere.

he said, and a shipowner during the greater part of that time. For sixteen years he had been almost exclusively engaged in the corn trade; after that he had applied himself to various branches of commerce connected with the West Indies and the Brazils, the East Indies and other parts of the world. The ordinary modes of conveyance, he declared, were quite inadequate to the requirements of the times, and were growing more so every day. When he settled in Liverpool, in 1787, the dock dues were 9,200*l.* In 1824 they were more than fifteen times as great. In 1788 there belonged to Liverpool 431 vessels, carrying 71,953 tons; in 1824 the number of vessels was 1,115, their burthen 176,151 tons. In 1788 3,677 vessels of all nations had entered the port; in 1824 there were upwards of 10,000, with cargoes weighing in all 1,180,914 tons. The warehousing system, he said, had been introduced into Liverpool in 1805. In 1806 the number of warehouses occupied by bonded goods was 85; in 1824, it had risen to 204. That wonderful growth of trade made absolutely necessary some improvements in the mode of conveyance, and therefore, Gladstone added, he earnestly hoped that the proposed railway might be permitted.

The other Liverpool merchant who gave evidence in support of the movement was William Brown. He was in the habit, he said, of shipping large quantities of goods, especially the manufactures of Manchester and its neighbourhood, to the United States. Other goods were imported by him for transmission to Manchester; and the entire value of the goods which he received and shipped sometimes amounted to 1,000,000*l.* a year. There was, he continued, a regular and ample means of communication between Liverpool and America. Four lines of ships, sixteen in all, traded with New York; two, comprising eight ships, went to Philadelphia, and one of these vessels visited Baltimore, each vessel carrying, on an average, about 50,000*l.*'s worth of goods, though sometimes the value was thrice as great. These vessels

started punctually, refusing to take in goods after the day fixed as the limit, and it frequently happened that great loss was experienced through the tardiness of the canal agents in transmitting the commodities which were ordered and ready for shipment. He too, like Gladstone, and all the other leading men of Liverpool, urged the absolute necessity of some swifter and surer mode of communication between the great seat of cotton manufacture and the great cotton trading port of England.

This William Brown, though twenty years younger than Gladstone, was, in 1825, second only to him as a Liverpool merchant, and second to none in the Liverpool cotton trade. He was an Irishman, brought up in America. His father, Alexander Brown, had been for some time, in a small way, a respectable merchant, chiefly concerned with the linen trade, at Ballymena, in the county of Antrim, and there William Brown was born in 1784. He was educated at a school kept by the Rev. Mr. Bradley, at Cathrich, near Richmond, in Yorkshire; but his schooling was over before he was sixteen years old. In 1800 his father emigrated with his family to Baltimore, in the United States, and there established his old business on a wider basis. William Brown was his quick-witted and very helpful clerk for a few years, and then his partner. It was through his energy, to a great extent, that the house of Alexander Brown and Sons, flax and linen merchants, soon became famous. Its shrewd founders made full use of the advantages offered by a quickly growing population in a richly productive country. Sending their flax across the water, they procured return cargoes of English commodities, and when they found that cotton was even more marketable than flax, they lost no time in including it in their shipments. In a few years they found it desirable to establish a branch business at Philadelphia, and another in New York. These were directed by James and John, Alexander Brown's two youngest sons, while George, the eldest, stayed to help manage the business

in Baltimore. William, the cleverest of the family, proceeded to England in December, 1808, and in 1810 opened another branch of the business in Liverpool.*

He came at a time of dismal suffering and terrible failure among the speculative merchants of Liverpool and their dependents; but the young merchant, taking prudent advantage of the consequent fluctuations of credit, reaped from them only profit. He soon became a famous man on 'Change. Admiring friends and jealous rivals followed his lead in their transactions, and found that they might implicitly rely both on the wisdom that guided his dealings and on the honesty that made his word as good as a bank note. A flax and cotton importer in especial, he extended his business to all sorts of merchandize. All the articles of American growth were either bought by him, or more frequently sent to him for sale on commission; and in return he despatched, either in his own name or in that of one or other of his many correspondents, immense cargoes of iron, earthenware, and the thousand and one other commodities grown, made, or bartered in England, to be sold in all parts of America. Through his foreign connections he was also able to carry on a great and most profitable India and China trade, long before the withdrawal of the East India Company's monopoly. While that monopoly lasted, no Liverpool merchant might trade direct with the East Indies; but no legislation could prevent the Browns of Baltimore or New York from buying for American use any quantity of tea, coffee, silk, or opium, and then, as soon as the cargoes had arrived, from re-shipping them to the Brown of Liverpool.

In these ways he very soon became a leader of Liverpool commerce. He did not, however, take much part in the general affairs of Liverpool, till after Gladstone's retirement.

Gladstone had married a daughter of Joseph Hall, of Liverpool, in 1792, who died without issue in 1798. In

* *Liverpool Mercury*, October 13, 1860; which contains a tolerably full memoir of Sir William Brown, written, I believe, by Mr. W. Storr, and revised by Sir William himself.

1800 he took for a second wife the daughter of Andrew Robertson, of Dingwall, in Ross-shire, who bore him several children. Of these, two, as they grew up, became chief managers of the commercial house, and left their father free to apply himself to other occupations.

John Gladstone was always a zealous politician. He was very active in procuring Canning's election as Member of Parliament for Liverpool in 1812. 'So great was his confidence in the abilities and principles of that distinguished statesman,' we are told, 'that—a difficulty having been started, in the preliminary state of the proceedings, as to the raising of funds to defray the expenses of the election—he offered to become personally responsible for the amount, whatever it might be, thus inspiring a feeling, and setting an example, which had the effect of speedily bringing forward other spirited and patriotic individuals to contribute liberally for the purpose.'* The result was the election of Canning and his associate Gascoyne, and the rejection of Brougham and Creevey, after seven days' polling, unparalleled in Liverpool history.† Canning was re-elected in 1816, 1818, and 1820, and on his retirement in 1823, Gladstone procured the election of his friend Huskisson, to continue the foremost representative of Liverpool up to the time of his death on the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in 1830.

Gladstone himself went into Parliament, as member for Lancaster, in 1818, the Tories of Liverpool subscribing 4,000*l.* towards the expenses of his election. In 1820 he was chosen to represent the borough of Woodstock; and in 1826 he was returned for Berwick, to be unseated on petition in the following year. In 1837, when he was seventy-three years old, he showed his persistent devotion to Tory principles by contesting—'not without some personal danger,' it was said—the Radical borough of Dundee.‡

* *Liverpool Courier*, December 17, 1851. † BAINES, pp. 550–554.
‡ *Liverpool Courier*, December 17, 1851.

During the many years that he was in the House of Commons, he held a respectable though not a brilliant position. He was no great speaker, but an honest voter; much employed in committee work and government business. He was a hearty supporter of Lord Liverpool's and Canning's ministries, and their frequent adviser on questions of commerce and finance. Once, we read, 'a sugar question was under discussion, and, as Goulburn was hammering and stammering through a string of figures and details, Huskisson smiled, as he quietly observed, "Goulburn has got his facts and figures and statistics from Gladstone, and they are all as correct and right as possible; but he does not understand them, and will make a regular hash of it."'* Huskisson did understand Gladstone's facts, figures, and statistics, and often made valuable use of them, both in his Parliamentary speeches and in his government projects. So it was especially in matters relating to the West Indies. Both Huskisson and Canning turned to Gladstone for advice on the vexed question of the abolition of slavery. Gladstone also, at a later day, was especially influential in adjusting with Lord Stanley, then Secretary for the Colonies, the terms of negro emancipation in 1834, and in procuring for the West Indian planters a grant of 20,000,000*l.* by way of compensation.†

Gladstone was a rich man from the beginning of the century; and he made good use of his wealth. All the charities of Liverpool, and not they alone, received from him liberal support. In 1815 he built, at a cost of 14,000*l.*, the large and handsome church of Saint Andrew, in Renshaw Street; and in 1817 he endowed another church, that of Saint Thomas, Seaforth, with schools adjoining it.‡ In 1816 he was elected governor and trustee of the old Blue Coat Hospital, to which he always proved a good friend.§ In all

* *Liverpool a Few Years Since*, p. 88.
† *Liverpool Courier*, December 17, 1851.
‡ *Pictorial Liverpool* (Birkenhead, 1850), pp. 91, 96, 262.
§ *Report of the Blue Coat Hospital*, Liverpool, 1846.

other sorts of benevolent undertakings he freely took part, one of the most notable being the commodious building, now the home of the Bible Society, the Charitable Society, and other bodies, in Slater Street, which he set up in conjunction with James Cropper and Samuel Hope.* In 1841 he built and endowed the Church of Saint Thomas in the Fields, Toxteth Park.† He also gave 1,000*l.* to the excellent Collegiate Institution in Shaw Street, whose foundation stone was laid by Lord Stanley, in October, 1840, and which was opened in January, 1843, the inaugural address being delivered by Mr. W. E. Gladstone.‡

Long before that Gladstone had ceased to make Liverpool his home, or to have much personal connection with Liverpool commerce. In February, 1824, his brother-merchants presented him with a splendid dinner service, 'to mark their high sense of his successful exertions for the promotion of trade and commerce, and in acknowledgment of his most important services rendered to the town of Liverpool.'§ The services continued to be rendered for more than a quarter of

* *Picturesque Handbook of Liverpool*, p. 82.

† *Liverpool Courier*, December 17, 1851.

‡ *Pictorial Liverpool*, p. 165; BAINES, p. 658.

§ *Liverpool Mercury*, October 22, 1824. 'At a meeting convened on the 9th of January, it was resolved, "That John Gladstone, Esq., M.P., has rendered most important services to this town, by his zeal and ability in promoting and increasing its trade, and by his support of all establishments having for their object the advancement of its prosperity and refinement: That, in particular, Liverpool is much indebted to his exertions for the formation of commercial associations, by which the trading interests have been so greatly consolidated and strengthened: That, in the different public institutions, whether formed for the purpose of relieving distress, promoting morals, or refining taste, his name is found amongst their most liberal and zealous patrons and friends: That, in his more public character, as a Member of Parliament, it is highly gratifying to record his accessibility, his unwearied attention to those who have sought his assistance, and his indefatigable efforts to protect and improve the commerce of the country at large, and, more particularly, the trade and interests of this town: That, in the opinion of this meeting, such important services have justly entitled him to our warmest acknowledgments."'—*Liverpool Mercury*, January 16, 1824. The result of that meeting was the testimonial referred to above.'

a century after that, but they generally came from a distance. In 1829, Gladstone bought the estate of Fasque and Balfour, in Kincardineshire. There he spent most of the last two-and-twenty years of his life, going often to London, and oftener to Liverpool, and spending several winters in Edinburgh and his native town of Leith. He was one of the directors of the Royal Bank of Edinburgh, and during some time subsequent to 1833 he took an active part in its management. In 1839 'he projected the steam ferry and breakwater pier across the Frith of Forth, from Leith to Burntisland, which had long been urgently required. His first endeavour was to induce the inhabitants of Fife to undertake this work; but they were not prepared for the exertion, upon which, in conjunction with the Duke of Buccleuch, he obtained an Act of Parliament, and the work was executed on their joint account. The ferry was afterwards sold to the Edinburgh, Perth, and Dundee Railway Company, of which undertaking he was also the originator.' Here also he carried on his benefactions. In 1840 he built in Leith an asylum for women afflicted with incurable diseases, which, to the time of his death, he supported at an annual cost of about 300*l.* In Leith, moreover, he built and endowed a church, with manse and schools attached to it.*

Even at Fasque his life was a busy one. His interest in political and social affairs continued to the last, and he found a new subject of interest in the management of his estate. 'He went a comparative stranger to that part of the country,' it is said, 'but his public utility and kindly disposition, and the friendly aid which he was ever ready to extend to all who required it, were not long in rendering him a great favourite. In business matters, and particularly in the reconcilement of business differences, he was ever ready to give the advantage of his clear and judicious opinion, which rarely failed in affording full satisfaction. He was a good

* *Liverpool Courier*, December 17, 1851.

and liberal landlord, who delighted to see his tenants thriving, and was by them deeply respected for the fair and generous manner in which he treated them. In private life he manifested the same order and regularity, the same energy of purpose and dignity of mind, which marked all his public conduct, and which, being blended in familiar intercourse with a warm disposition, rendered him a sure and steadfast friend, as well as a kind and affectionate parent.'*

In June, 1846, shortly before Sir Robert Peel's retirement from office, John Gladstone was offered a baronetcy. He accepted it, 'solely on condition that, in doing so, he should not be considered to recognise the propriety of Sir Robert Peel's free-trade policy,'† so stanch a Tory was he to the last. He died at Fasque, eighty-seven years old, on the 7th of December, 1851;‡ almost forgotten in Liverpool, where he had lived for more than forty years, but recognised by all who did remember him as, for Liverpool, 'the master-spirit of the age in which he lived; every inch a merchant prince; keen, energetic, industrious and persevering; cautious and prudent, yet withal liberal and generous, without being lavish or needlessly profuse.'§ 'We never remember,' said one who knew him, 'to have met with a man who possessed so inexhaustible a fund of common sense. He was never at fault, never baffled. His shrewdness as a man of business was proverbial. His sagacity in all matters connected with commerce was only not prophetic. He seemed to take the whole map of the world into his mind at one glance, and almost by intuition to discover, not only which were the best markets for to-day, but where would be the best opening to-morrow.'‖

Those remarks were as applicable to Sir William Brown as to Sir John Gladstone. Brown was an influential mer-

* *Liverpool Courier*, December 17, 1851.
† *Morning Post*, December 12, 1851.
‡ *Liverpool Mercury*, December 9, 1851.
§ *Liverpool Courier*, December 17, 1851.
‖ *Liverpool a Few Years Since*, p. 88.

chant in Liverpool, as we have seen, some fifteen years before Gladstone's retirement from the active pursuit of commerce. In public life, however, he only began to be prominent about the time of Gladstone's removal from Liverpool to Fasque. Having left Baltimore near the end of 1808, and being very nearly captured while on the passage to England by a French privateer, which chased the vessel he was in to the mouth of Falmouth Harbour, he went first to his old home in Ballymena, and married a daughter of Mr. Andrew Gihon, of that town.

In 1810, at the age of six-and-twenty, he was established in Liverpool as agent of the American house of Alexander Brown and Sons, and also as a merchant on his own account.* For some years he devoted himself almost exclusively to commerce, doing his utmost to attain a place of eminence among the eminent merchants of Liverpool. Therein he succeeded wonderfully, and as his business prospered, he began to take an influential position in the general affairs of the town. The honorary freedom of the borough was conferred upon him in 1818. In August, 1828, he was elected a member of the Dock Committee. Four years later he became conspicuous as leader of a project for reformation of the old modes of dock government, which being in the hands of a committee composed of thirteen delegates from the council, and only eight from the body of dock ratepayers, was conducted much more to the advantage of the proprietors than to the convenience of the public. The appointment of a very young man as solicitor to the committee gave Brown and those who worked with him an opportunity for complaining that the whole business was carried on in a wrong and unjust way. Public meetings were held and a fierce opposition was begun, to be carried on zealously for a year or two and then to languish until 1832, when the desired reforms

* *Liverpool Mercury*, October 13, 1860. Most of the information given in ensuing pages, and not otherwise vouched for, is drawn from the memoir there given by Mr. Storr.

were effected with the sanction of Parliament. Brown was publicly thanked by his fellow ratepayers for his share in the work, in 1833; but in 1834 the Conservative influence brought against him was so strong that he lost his place on the Dock Committee.

Other offices were conferred upon him in abundance. In March, 1831, the Bank of Liverpool was established, and William Brown, who had a large stake in it, was made chairman of its board of directors. So successful was the undertaking, that in the autumn of 1832, each member of the board received from the shareholders a present of 50*l.*'s worth of plate. And Brown's prosperous banking was not limited to superintendence of the Bank of Liverpool. The extent of his business, and the entire uprightness with which he conducted it, made him, to all practical purposes, a banker and money-lender. The traders on both sides of the Atlantic, who transmitted their goods through him, sometimes procured from him advances on account of the goods in his possession, long before they were sold; at other times they found it convenient to leave large sums in his hands long after the goods were disposed of, knowing that they could draw whenever they needed, and that in the meanwhile their money was being so profitably invested that they were certain of a proper interest for their loans.

Working in these ways, first as representative in Liverpool of the American house of Alexander Brown and Sons, then as member of the firm of William Brown and Brothers, and finally as head and soul of the establishment of Brown, Shipley, and Company, William Brown throve amazingly. He became more thoroughly a Liverpool merchant than he had been before, after the death of his father, at Baltimore, on the 30th of April, 1834.* In 1835 he was made an alder-

* The *Liverpool Mercury*, in sketching his career, applauded him especially for his share in establishing "one of those splendid lines of packets which have rendered the mercantile transactions between Liverpool and the United States superior to those of any other part of the world for punctuality, safety, and expedition."

man, and took a prominent part in the movement which led to the removal of some oppressive clauses in the Municipal Reform Bill of that year. In 1836, he bought the Brandon estate, near Coventry, from the Marquis of Hastings, for 80,000*l.* In that year, it was reported, business to the amount of 10,000,000*l.* passed through his hands. It was a year, however, of excessive trading both in England and in America, and especially in the dealings of the two countries with one another. 'American commerce was at that time a towering pile in course of erection; bank credit was the scaffolding. In 1837, the American banks, all over the Union, went down one after another, and many together, with an almost universal crash.' Several English banks, and a yet greater number of English merchants, also stopped payment; and people had good reason for fearing the ruin of the Browns, when it was known that, at one time, they had 750,000*l.*'s worth of protested bills on their hands.' 'Had they possessed less than the strength of giants,' said one, writing a few years after the time, 'they could not have extricated themselves. The British Government saw, and looked with apprehension as it saw, the struggle of this gigantic establishment. From Inverness to Penzance there was not a single town but would have felt its fall. In Sheffield and Birmingham, and the towns surrounding them; in Manchester, Leeds, and all the great factory communities, a large number of merchants and employers, and, as a matter of course, every man and woman employed, were more or less involved in the fate of this establishment.'* It was not only, therefore, on his own account that William Brown, even more alarmed at his position than the public could be, resolved upon a bold course of action, and worked it through with notable success, setting an example that has often since been followed in times of commercial panic. As soon as ever he was convinced that something must be done or he would fail, he hurried up to London, sought an interview with Mr. Curtis,

* *Morning Chronicle*, 1844.

then Chairman of the Bank of England, and on assuring him that thus, and thus only, could his credit be saved, obtained from him the promise of a loan larger than had ever yet been made to any private individual in the world—a loan of no less than 2,000,000*l.* Taking his protested bills and other vouchers for substantial, though just then useless wealth, as security, the bank authorities empowered him to draw upon them to that amount. He found it necessary to make application for hardly half as much; and that, with interest, was all repaid within six months, William Brown receiving a letter from the Directors to the effect that they had never had a more satisfactory transaction with any other house.* Thus nobly helped through a trouble that was not of his causing, William Brown worked harder than ever, not lessening his strictly commercial dealings, but subordinating them to an ever-growing banking connection, forced upon him by his customers, and willingly accepted, as an easy and safe way of making money.

His growing importance in the towns appears from the frequent records of his co-operation in local and municipal affairs. As an alderman, he took an active part in the business of the Town Council, until his retirement in October, 1838. In September, 1837, he sought to increase the public contributions to town charities, and in October he brought some abuse on himself by his advocacy of religious freedom in schools. In February, 1838, he called the Council's attention to a pamphlet lately issued by Mr. Rowland Hill on Post Office Reform, and pointing out the value of this agency in extending commerce, improving education, and strengthening friendship, urged its energetic action in the matter; and in July, 1839, he took the lead at a public meeting for petitioning Parliament in favour of a penny postage. In April, 1841, he shared in a movement in favour of the early closing of shops. In November, 1844, he joined with Mr. William Rathbone in heading a subscription on behalf

* *Morning Chronicle*, 1841. *Liverpool Mercury*, October 13, 1860.

of Father Matthew, whose devotion to teetotalism had brought him into pecuniary difficulties. In 1845 he was patron of a series of cheap Saturday evening concerts, designed for the healthful entertainment of the working classes.

Of that sort were the lesser efforts in which he was engaged for the advancement of education and the improvement of the people. A much more famous enterprise of which he was from first to last a hearty supporter was the Anti-Corn-Law League. To the cause of free trade he was a good friend long before the League was organized. "Mr. Brown is not an anti-monopolist of yesterday," said Richard Cobden, in 1844. "There is a fact singularly to the honour of Mr. Brown, and which strikingly proves the disinterestedness with which he is willing to assail monopolies, even when he himself may be supposed to be interested in them. During the time of the monopoly of the China market by the East India Company, Mr. Brown was one of those in England who had a monopoly of the private trade with China, which was carried on through American houses. No private house could trade with those countries; but the Americans took up the trade in an indirect way, and Mr. Brown was the agent for that commerce, which became a very important branch of his business. When the proposal was made to abolish the monopoly of the East India Company in the China trade, Mr. Brown went to London and gave evidence before the Parliamentary Committee in favour of opening the trade with China, though to do so would be to deprive himself of the monopoly he then had in the trade with that country."

That was in 1831. In March, 1839, while Brown was on a visit to America, the Anti-Corn-Law League was formed. In January, 1840, he spoke at a meeting in the Sessions House, convened with a view to petitioning Parliament for a repeal of the Corn Laws. He there advocated the League on the plea that, by refusing admittance to American corn, we were forcing the Americans to turn their energies to manufactures, and thus were at once keeping the

necessaries of life at a starvation price and lessening the sources of wealth requisite to the purchase of those necessaries.* He spoke at other meetings, contributed freely to the funds needed for carrying on the free trade battle, and in other ways gave all the help he could. "In Liverpool," said Cobden, in the speech already quoted from, "Mr. Brown's adhesion to the Anti-Monopoly Society was an event about as important to our movement there as the adhesion of Mr. Samuel Jones Loyd to the League's proceedings was in London." In the autumn of 1843 he was chosen vice-president of the Liverpool Anti-Monopoly Association, subscribing 100*l.* to its funds, with an additional 50*l.* to be spent in the dissemination of tracts on the subject among farmers and others. "By sticking to the text of Anti-Monopoly alone," he said in the letter that accompanied that gift, "we shall unite men of all political parties to get the corn laws repealed. We claim the right of private judgment, and we must allow it to others without impugning their motives."†

In 1844, William Brown appeared much more prominently as a champion of free trade. A vacancy having occurred in the representation of South Lancashire, the leaders of the Anti-Corn Law League urged him to seek a place in Parliament as a supporter of the cause. With that intent he began a vigorous canvass, addressing meetings at Liverpool, Manchester, Warrington, Ormskirk, Southport, Wigan, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, and other places. Meetings on his behalf were held in the great Free Trade Hall of Manchester, at which Cobden and others of the party urged his claims on popular favour. He was defeated, as might almost have been expected; but in this election the Liberal party showed themselves possessed of unlooked-for strength in the Tory district. Two years later, William Brown was elected without opposition. In February, 1845,

* *Liverpool Mercury*, October 13, 1860.

† *Ibid.*; PRENTICE, *History of the Anti-Corn-Law League*, vol. ii., p. 133.

he presided at a League meeting in Covent Garden Theatre, when Cobden introduced him as 'the late candidate and future representative of South Lancashire in Parliament.'

In the meanwhile, William Brown continued to prosper mightily as a merchant and banker. "If any of you know what a bale of cotton is," said Richard Cobden, in an earlier speech delivered in 1844, "you are only one remove from a near acquaintance with Mr. Brown, who has in his hands one-sixth part of the trade between this country and the United States. There is hardly a wind that blows, or a tide that flows in the Mersey, that does not bring a ship freighted with cotton, or some other costly commodity, for Mr. Brown's house; and not a lorry in the streets but what is destined to carry cloth or other commodities consigned to the care of Mr. Brown, to be shipped to America, China, or other parts of the world."

Those words were spoken on the occasion of William Brown's proposal to enter Parliament as member for South Lancashire. He failed, as we have seen, in 1844; but he was elected in 1846: and he took his seat in Parliament just in time to hear the royal assent given to the Corn-Law Repeal Bill.

At that time he was sixty-two years of age; and henceforth he left business matters chiefly in the hands of younger managers. For thirteen years he was an honest and energetic member of Parliament, though not very effective as a speaker. A weak voice and a tame delivery made his speeches—nearly all of them on commercial questions—uninteresting to the many; but the few who valued these topics found them rich in shrewd and generous thought. An anecdote, recorded by an eye-witness, gives curious illustration of his position in the House:—'The honourable member,' we are told, 'was the warm advocate of a decimal coinage, and on one occasion gave notice of his intention to bring it before the House. As it was his intention to quote a good deal of documentary evidence in support of his views,

the honourable gentleman, for the convenience of referring to his papers, spoke from the table on the Opposition side. Members turned their best ear to the great merchant; but as few of his remarks reached them, it is no wonder that a gentleman, said to be connected with the Mint, who had been favoured with a seat under the gallery, was still less fortunate. Not a syllable could he hear, who had come prepared to enjoy a great intellectual and arithmetical treat. He converted his hand into an ear-trumpet, but in vain; and his despair grew tragic. At length, as the sound would not come to Gamaliel, Gamaliel determined to go to the sound. Accordingly he left his seat, and entering the sacred precincts of the House, he sauntered along the Opposition benches, nor stopped until he had gained the bench immediately behind Mr. Brown, where he composed himself to the enjoyment of the honourable Member's remarks. After a few minutes, for the speech was a long one, an usher was struck by a face not familiar to him, and he asked a brother-usher "who that new member was?" Nobody knew him. The clerks at the table were appealed to, but they could not remember having administered the oaths to the strange visitor. The Serjeant-at-Arms was now apprised that there was a stranger, or what seemed such, in the body of the House. The matter became serious. It is a high breach of privilege for any person not a member to enter the House itself (by which is not meant the part allotted to strangers), the penalty being commitment to custody, if not removal to Newgate or the Tower, and the payment of a good round sum in the shape of fees. The Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms made his way to the stranger, asked him to follow him, and led him from the body of the House. We all expected a "scene," an appearance at the bar, a humble apology, a rebuke from the Speaker, or, perhaps, a remand and a search for precedents. Mr. Shaw Lefevre (now Viscount Eversley), however, took a more lenient and sensible view of the matter, and strained the

practice of the House in the visitor's favour. His offence was so manifestly involuntary, and Mr. Brown was so provokingly inaudible, that the Speaker advised that no public notice of the matter should be taken by the Serjeant-at-Arms. The offender was therefore dismissed, and the matter was never brought before the House at all. Mr. Brown all this time, unconscious of the occurrence, was quoting his statistics, reading his documents, and endeavouring, in vain, to make himself heard.'*

He did make himself heard, however, in indirect ways, both in and out of Parliament. 'The greatest public service rendered by Mr. Brown, if not in Parliament, yet in virtue of his parliamentary position,' says the authority just cited, 'was in 1856. The government of the United States

* *London Review*, November 3, 1860. 'Decimal coinage and the licensing system,' said the *Liverpool Mercury*, 'are the subjects on which Mr. Brown has taken a leading part in the House. The Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, in December, 1852, took up the question of decimal notation, and were supported by a public meeting of the inhabitants, presided over by the Mayor. They memorialised the Government, but no action was taken until Parliament met in 1854, when Mr. Brown obtained a committee of inquiry into the merits of the principle. That committee made a unanimous report of its importance and in its favour. Nothing further being done, Mr. Brown, in 1855, again brought the subject before the House, and was seconded and supported by Lord Stanley. The result was that Government appointed a royal commission, who took evidence and published it without a report, as they were unable to agree upon one. Lord Overstone, however, published a report of his own. The licensing question Mr. Brown took up in April, 1853. Great dissatisfaction had been expressed by some of the Liverpool magistracy with the operation and results of the existing system. They held meetings, drew up and adopted a report urging a parliamentary inquiry, and forwarded it to the Secretary of State. Mr. Brown moved the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the system of licensing public houses, hotels, beershops, dancing saloons, coffee houses, theatres, and other places of entertainment. The inquiry, over which the Hon. C. P. Villiers principally presided, extended over two sessions; many witnesses from Liverpool were examined; and the report and the evidence occupied two ponderous blue-books, containing 1,174 pages. Among other things, the report recommended that public houses and beerhouses should be placed on the same footing, that higher rates should be paid for licenses, and that more stringent regulations should be enforced as to character and sureties.'

declared that the British Minister at Washington had violated the law of the United States in raising a foreign legion in the Union for service in the Crimea, and summarily dismissed Mr. Crampton. Lord Palmerston warmly resented the insult, and vindicated the conduct of her Majesty's minister. The American Government had allowed proceedings to go on which they afterwards contended were contrary to the law of the United States, without sending for Mr. Crampton, or telling him what it was supposed he was guilty of doing. "They allow these things to accumulate," said Lord Palmerston, "in order that, when the proper time arrives, they may either take advantage of them, or deal with them as matters which do not deserve consideration." These views being fully shared by the Cabinet, the public were prepared by a semi-official announcement for the dismissal of Mr. Dallas. Great alarm prevailed in monetary and commercial circles. A sudden activity was observable in our arsenals and dockyards. Supplies of the *matériel* of war were sent out to Canada; and the Secretary of State for the Colonies assured the Canadians that they would be supported by the whole force of the mother country in the event of war. Troops were despatched to British North America, and heavily-armed vessels of war received sailing orders for the American seaboard. So great was the uneasiness, that the underwriters at Lloyds were asked in almost every case to insure against capture and seizure, and a percentage was actually charged for the increased risk. Public opinion at home supported the Government in declaring that Mr. Crampton's dismissal by President Pierce was unjustifiable, indefensible, and offensive. At this moment of peril, when the rupture of diplomatic negotiations between the two countries would probably have been followed by insulting and belligerent proceedings on the Canadian frontier and in central America, Mr. Brown came forward as a mediator between the two countries. He deprecated irritating debates in Parliament, induced Mr. Baillie to withdraw a party question condemna-

tory of the Government in regard to enlistment in the States, and made an appeal to a virulent Irish member, who was determined to make a speech on the subject, which fixed him with a tremendous weight of responsibility, and procured him a signal defeat on a division. The honourable member for South Lancashire offered his personal mediation between Lord Palmerston and Mr. Dallas, and meanwhile expressed his conviction in the House of Commons, that the disputes between the two countries would be amicably arranged to the satisfaction of both Governments, if no new cause of disagreement were supplied by party debates. The American minister in London gladly accepted Mr. Brown's mediation, for he did not wish to be sent back to Washington. With Lord Palmerston the honourable member's task was more difficult. What took place at these interviews has never been publicly stated. Some assert that Mr. Brown put before the Premier facts and figures proving that a rupture between the two countries would be followed not only by rebellion in the slave states, but also by a revolution in Lancashire. Others, with perhaps more reason, opine that Mr. Brown represented the conduct of the American Government as an attempt to get a little "Buncombe" out of the difficulty, with an eye to the next presidential election, and it was so regarded in the Union—that the attempt would signally fail (as the event proved)—and that if Lord Palmerston would only treat the affair as an unscrupulous and desperate attempt to get up a little political capital, he would, in a few months, be rewarded for his forbearance by seeing President Pierce and Secretary Marcy relapse into political obscurity and insignificance. Those who know Lord Palmerston best, affirm that the appeal to his magnanimity succeeded, when cotton statistics, tonnage, and all sorts of figures failed to shake his resolution to vindicate the insult passed upon her Majesty's representative. The Prime Minister yielded to the representations of one who spoke with peculiar weight, not only as a merchant, but as one

of the most consistent and influential of Lord Palmerston's admirers and supporters in Parliament. Mr. Brown was not, however, satisfied with mediating between the two governments. He appealed to the two nations, and at his instance Liverpool, Manchester, and other English towns, adopted addresses to the larger and more influential cities of the Union. These demonstrations elicited cordial and satisfactory responses from the other side of the Atlantic, breathing peace, and denouncing those who attempted to kindle disunion between two great and kindred nations. The political horizon soon cleared. Mr. Dallas remained in London, and Mr. Brown received the thanks and congratulations of all who knew his noble and useful endeavours to avert so hideous, unnatural, and horrible an event as a war between the two countries.'*

With good reason might Nathaniel Hawthorne, then United States Consul at Liverpool, say, in 1858, of the man who could do all this, that "he grasped, as it were, England with his right hand and America with his left." Both nations should be proud of William Brown. From first to last he exerted the influence he had acquired by long years of perseverance and integrity in promoting the welfare of his fellows and the development of liberal thoughts and kindly feelings among governors as well as governed in both the nations that he had dealings with. And a fair measure of the wealth that came from those dealings was spent in works of philanthropy. To the Northern Hospital, in Great Howard Street, he was a hearty friend from its foundation in 1834. In 1844 he took a leading part in the inauguration of the new building designed for its use, and contributed 1,000*l.* towards the expenses of its erection. In August, 1845, he laid the foundation-stone of Holy Trinity Church at Walton-breck, and in all sorts of other religious and charitable movements he was from time to time concerned.

* *London Review*, November 3, 1860.

But all his earlier philanthropies are eclipsed by his last, and, in the town itself, almost unexampled piece of benevolence as donor of its Free Library to Liverpool. About the year 1850 a small Free Library was opened in Duke Street, which in 1857 had so grown that it comprised about 22,000 books. William Brown resolved that it should be very much larger and have a very much larger house. In September, 1853, he offered to give a sum of 6,000*l.* towards constructing a suitable library for the town of Liverpool, if the Corporation would provide a proper site. The offer was accepted in the following October; 10,000*l.* were voted for the purchase of ground, and an act of Parliament was obtained. There was some delay in proceeding with the work as it was thought that more than 6,000*l.* was needed for a building worthy of the town. No one else was ready, however, to increase the sum to the requisite extent, and in October, 1856, Brown offered to double his gift, if another sum of 6,000*l.* were given by others. Still no advance was made, and in December, the worthy merchant declaring that he had set his heart on this business, and that he desired to see it finished during his lifetime, announced his intention to take the whole expense, whatever it might be, upon himself. No time was wasted after that. A spacious plot of ground, behind St. George's Hall, was cleared, and the foundation-stone of the new building was laid by William Brown on the 15th of April, 1857.

"When I proposed building the library and museum," he said, in answer to one of thirteen addresses presented to him on that occasion, "I considered that I was only performing an act of public duty, which kind providence had placed within my power, and which deserved very little thanks." "I would not," he said, in another of these replies, "exclude from libraries any works but what the ministers of religion consider decidedly immoral. Readers ought to have access to both sides of a question. Place the bane and the antidote before them—they have a ready conception of what is right

and what is wrong. I am sanguine that the more intelligence they acquire the less we shall be subject to those ebullitions of public opinion which always inflict distress on the parties in place of benefiting their situation. I feel assured, the more we know the more we shall value the excellent constitution under which we live." *

Entering on his philanthropic enterprise in those ways, William Brown was able, on the 18th of October, 1860, to present to the town of Liverpool the handsome building which, having the old Duke Street Library and the adjoining Derby Museum—a collection of birds collected by the late Earl of Derby and presented to Liverpool by his son—for its nucleus, was completed and stocked with books and varieties of all sorts, at a cost to its founder of not less than 40,000*l.*, besides some 25,000*l.* supplied by the Corporation and a few other subscribers. It was done amid all possible display of enthusiasm, amid public meetings, splendid banquets, brilliant balls, and wonderful street demonstrations and processions.†

This was, as it was meant to be, the crowning work of William Brown's career. Three years later he was appointed High Sheriff of Lancashire, and honoured with a baronetcy. He died on the 3rd of March, 1864, seventy-nine years old.

* *Liverpool Mercury*, October 13, 1860.
† *Liverpool Daily Post*, October 18 and 19, 1860.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JAMES EWING OF GLASGOW.

[1775–1853.]

HUMPHREY EWING, son of another Humphrey Ewing, a native of Cardross in Dumbartonshire, was a merchant in Glasgow early in the eighteenth century. He married the daughter of John Maclae, another Glasgow trader; and his son, Walter, inheriting most of the wealth of both relatives, took the names of both, and was known as Walter Ewing Maclae of Cathkin.* He was not himself much of a merchant. For some fifteen or twenty years, before he changed his name and became a rich man in 1790, he found his chief employment in acting as factor and trustee for bankrupt properties.† From 1790 till 1814, when he died, at the age of seventy, though chiefly busied with the management of his Cathkin estate, he continued to hold honourable place in Glasgow by performing the half legal and half mercantile duties of an arbitrator on commercial questions. 'An extensive knowledge of mercantile business, of the principles of equity and of the laws of his country,' said his nephew, Dr. Wardlaw, 'eminently qualified him for discharging the important functions of an arbitrator. In this capacity, uncommon clearness of judgment enabled him to develop many cases of peculiar complexity and difficulty; and, feeling strongly the weight of responsibility, his decisions were the result, always, of full

* *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., p. 550. † *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 549.

and often laborious investigation, united with the most inflexible and conscientious integrity. These qualifications were equally displayed in the more public situation of a magistrate: as a justice of peace he fulfilled his duty with honour to himself and advantage to the community; and in the parish over the affairs of which he was called to preside as a deputy lieutenant, he at once maintained order and conciliated attachment. Firm integrity, joined with correctness, promptitude, punctuality, and an unusual measure of forethought and prudence, distinguished him in all transactions of business. His advice was highly valued, and in every case where he was satisfied it could be of any service, it was freely bestowed. He had peculiar satisfaction in relieving the unfortunate and extricating the embarrassed, both by his aid and by his counsel. To his tenants and all placed under him he was endeared by a kind and condescending frankness, which encouraged them in all their difficulties to look to him as their confidant and friend. An engaging mildness, ease and affability of manner, rendered him open and accessible to all classes, and while it won their affections to himself, contributed in an eminent degree to diffuse amongst others harmony and peace.'*

This good man had three sons. Humphrey, the eldest, went out early in life to succeed a maternal uncle, named Ralph Fisher, in the management of some extensive and very profitable estates in Jamaica, and came home, on his father's death, to succeed to the family possessions at Cathkin. Walter, the youngest, also going abroad, died at Charleston, in South Carolina, when he was only twenty years old. James, the second son, became one of the greatest merchants of Glasgow.

He was born on the 7th of December, 1775, fifteen years before his father became the owner of Cathkin House. His early training was of the rigid kind thought proper in a

* *Glasgow Reminiscences: Memoir of the late James Ewing, Esq.* (Glasgow, 1853, 1854), p. 4.

Presbyterian home. 'When almost still a child,' we are told, 'to his mother's equal gratification and surprise, James, in his father's absence, would gladly undertake—not lightly, but with gravity and the solemnity due to the service—the conducting of family worship in his father's house, and was wondered at for the propriety and richness of his devotional expression and style of address.'* For all that, he was a laughing, happy boy, quick-witted and fond of his lessons. One of his great-uncles—the original of Smollett's 'good-natured usher' in *Roderick Random*, it is reported—was his especial counsellor and friend, and the chief promoter of the literary tastes which, cultivated in youth, remained with him through life. Studying first at the High School, and then, from the age of twelve, at Glasgow University, he earned all possible distinctions at both, and, when his schooling was over, he went into the busy world, determined still to be a student and a hard worker for the rest of his days.† He was employed for a year or two in his father's office in Glasgow, there to master the intricacies of book-keeping.‡ But it was intended that he should be an advocate, and he had already begun making particular study of the law, when, somewhat against his will, and chiefly at the instigation of his brother Humphrey and other members of the family who were specially interested in commerce, he changed his project and resolved to be a merchant.§

The chief inducement was in the fact that Humphrey Ewing needed a trustworthy agent to whom to consign the sugars which he, with James Laing, the brother of the historian, for his partner, was producing in large quantities on the Jamaica estates. The harm done to the old trade of

* Dr. Macintosh Mackay, *Memoir of James Ewing, Esquire, of Strathleven* (Glasgow, 1868), p. 17. Dr. Mackay's book appeared while I was collecting materials for the above chapter. It contains much interesting matter that I could not otherwise have expected to acquire; and the extent of my debt to it will appear in subsequent notes.

† Mackay, pp. 18, 19. ‡ *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., p. 549.

§ Mackay, p. 20.

the tobacco merchants with Virginia, that was caused by the American War of Independence, was very helpful to the Jamaica sugar trade. Many enterprising men, like Humphrey Ewing, went out to turn the then profitable estates to the best account, and the sugar consigned to Glasgow gave employment to a new race of merchants. Of these James Ewing was the most successful. Beginning business when he was about eighteen or twenty years of age, he soon became almost the busiest and most energetic man of his class in Glasgow. 'Readiness, firmness, decision, soundness of discretion, and the most conciliatory bearing,' we are told, 'were in all his business movements, with a perspicuity of judgment that could see far through risks and dangers, and could with steadfastness guide him to avoid them, just as his own firmness of principle made him sure to shun whatever might tempt to any questionable course of action. It became the surprise of many among his fellow-citizens that one individual should be able to maintain full and perfect punctuality and the highest order in all the details of a business now grown into such extent and amount; and to his nearer friends, acquaintances, and more select associates, it was matter of still greater surprise that when released from the toil and worryings of the day he showed a buoyancy and hilarity of manner and a relish for social and cheerful enjoyment, as if nothing had ever disturbed or burdened his mind, or had given colouring to his habit of thought or broken in upon his constitutional equanimity.'*

When Ewing became one of its merchants, Glasgow was a compact little town, containing about 70,000 inhabitants in a space of little more than a square mile, with old Glasgow Cross for its centre. Most of the old shopkeepers and bankers were in Trongate and Gallowgate, High Street and Salt Market. There too the old tobacco lords had their offices, their residences being generally in George Square, John Street, and the neighbourhood, then known as the New

* Mackay, pp. 21, 22.

Town. Other stately houses, like David Dale's famous mansion in Charlotte Street, were nearer the Clyde, in Virginia Street, Saint Enoch's Square, and the adjoining parts. Most of the small shipping trade of the town was conducted on the Broomielaw, and the manufacturing suburb of Anderston, still further to the west, was growing into importance chiefly through the enterprise of men like the Monteiths. But Saint Andrew's Square was at that time the great place for manufacturers' warehouses and dwelling-places, with Charlotte Street a little to the east, and the two great factories lately set up by the Monteiths at Barrowfield and Dalmarnock, about a mile further off. Glasgow Green was the fashionable place for country walks. On the north side of Trongate, between the Cross and Queen Street, was the favourite town promenade of the wealthy folk.* Further holiday taking, even fifteen years later, was by no means easy. 'A gentleman resident in Glasgow in 1811,' we read, 'desired to convey his family for summer residence to the village of Gourock, three miles beyond Greenock, on the Clyde. They set out from Glasgow in the morning, in one of the passage boats at that time plying on the river, and known, not very appropriately, as flies. The whole of that day was spent in making good their way the length of Bowling Bay, not half way from Glasgow to Greenock, and there they came to anchor for the night. Weighing next morning, and proceeding to sea, the wind being contrary, after spending the whole day in buffeting the waves of the Clyde, they were forced to put back, returning the second night to Bowling Bay. The third day they made the next attempt, and succeeded in making Port Glasgow in the afternoon, where the passengers took post-horses, leaving the fly in disgust; and having seen his family housed in Gourock, the gentleman, on the fourth day, returned by land to Glasgow, weary, sick, and exhausted, the voyage and journey costing him 7*l.* 14*s.*'†

* Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs.*

† *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. vi.

For the wonderful change that has been made in Glasgow during the last fifty years, the chief praise belongs to James Ewing and the other merchants contemporary with him. Of these none were more notable than Kirkman Finlay and Charles Tennant. Both were members of old Glasgow families. In 1736 the heirs of Hugh Tennant and John Finlay, merchants, owned a house in Gallowgate Street, and it was in Gallowgate Street that Kirkman Finlay was born in 1772.* His father, James Finlay, was at that time an enterprising Glasgow merchant. He was one of the founders, in company with Patrick Colquhoun, of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce.† He was a great promoter of political reform and of free trade principles, and he showed his disposition by naming his son after Alderman Kirkman of London, just then a prominent advocate of the tenets dear to his heart.‡ The younger Finlay was true to his name. He also became a great merchant. In 1791 he was living with his father in Bell's Wynd, and taking a principal share in the business then carried on in Smith's Court, Candleriggs. Soon it was removed to Brunswick Square; and in 1816 new and spacious offices were set up on the ground now occupied by the National Bank buildings.§ There is evidence of the extent of his business, in the election taunt, when he was being chosen Member of Parliament, that thereby he was going to save the house of James Finlay and Company 1,000*l.* a year merely by franking its letters; and further proof to the same end is in the fact that, at one time, having sent to India vast orders for cotton, in anticipation of a rise in price, and finding himself therein mistaken, he sent an overland express messenger, all the way from Glasgow to Bengal to countermand the order.‖ In 1812 he was chosen Lord Provost of Glasgow, and Member of Parliament for the Glasgow Burghs. Failing at the election for a fresh

* *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. i., pp. 62, 63. † *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 300.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 34. § *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 31; vol. iii., p. 633.
‖ *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 103, 109.

Parliament in 1819, he was in that year appointed Lord Rector for Glasgow University.

Charles Tennant, a man who cared less for public honours, was quite as helpful to the real prosperity of his native town. He was born in 1768, and a young man looking for a pursuit to which to devote himself, when the new school of English chemists, with Priestley and Dalton at its head, attracted general attention. Tennant entered it as a pupil, and there learned lessons which, joined with remarkable business capabilities, made him the greatest chemical manufacturer in the world. In 1798 he patented the process of bleaching now everywhere adopted, by a combination of chlorine with lime, which he had discovered, with some assistance from James Watt, the friend of Priestley, and the inventor of the steam-engine; and in 1800 he established his chemical works at Saint Rollox, then an out-of-the-way suburb of Glasgow, now the centre of a crowded district. Here he began the wholesale manufacture of his bleaching powder, and in course of time adding to it other chemical operations, developed a business of wonderful extent and importance, before his death in 1838.*

* *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. vi., p. 163. The Saint Rollox Chemical Works now occupy fourteen acres of ground. 'The most extraordinary part of the works,' it was said in 1858, 'is that in which the sulphuric acid is made. In going into this place we pass between two mountains of sulphur, each of which contains 5,000 tons. Passing an immense row of glowing furnaces, we ascend some hundred feet above the surrounding buildings. Immediately beneath us are fifty-eight lead chambers for receiving the sulphurous gas and converting it into vitriol. Each of these immense aërial reservoirs holds 21,000 cubic feet of gas. These chambers are approached by many miles of wooden stages. Returning to the furnaces, we see men breaking up the mountains of crystalized soda, and bearing immense loads of salt into them—salt being the basis of all the leading articles manufactured in the works, with the exception of vitriol. We now come to a pair of stills, in which the sulphuric acid is reduced in bulk and raised in strength. These stills are made of platina; no other material will stand the combination of such intense heat with the corroding liquid that passes through them. Upon leaving this place we pass between huge air-tight chambers in which cloride of lime is made. Eighteen tons of lime, finely powered, are put into one of these compartments, and after this has undergone the necessary process, it comes out twelve tons heavier

Ewing was seven years younger than Tennant, three years younger than Finlay. Of the details of his early mercantile life we have no records. But in 1814, when his father died and his mother was too oppressed with her loneliness to choose to live longer in Cathkin House, he was rich enough to buy for 6,000*l.* the handsomest house then to be seen in Glasgow, at the northern end of Queen Street, known as Queen Street Park, and fit it up in costly manner for her use.* The good lady was never able to enjoy

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than when it went in, having absorbed two-thirds its weight in chlorine. This part of the St. Rollox Works occupies thirteen acres. In another department of the huge establishment, some sixty tons of soap are made each week; and a little further off is the St. Rollox cooperage. From eight hundred to nine hundred casks, large and small, are turned out in this place weekly. Every part of a cask is made by machinery. In one place the staves are planed and shaped, in another the heads and bottoms are cut and bevelled. The staves necessary to form a cask are set up by men for the purpose with a single iron hoop, The embryo cask is then placed in a steam chamber, and when taken out, is put in another chamber, where the two halves of a mould of the required size are made to enfold the staves by the powerful aid of a Bramah press. When the cask comes out of one of these machines it is braced tight by four strong iron hoops. All that requires to be done to complete the work, is to put on the wooden hoops, sixteen of which are required for each cask, and fit in the ends. For some time past the firm of Charles Tennant and Company have had two screw-steamers plying between London and Glasgow, and a third steamer carries the produce of their works to the various ports of the Baltic, and returns freighted with materials for their own consumption. Numerous coasting vessels are constantly employed in bringing limestone from Ireland and sulphur from Italy. The firm also has coal-mines of its own, with an iron-foundry to supply the machinery and other fittings of the works. The average number of men employed in the works is a thousand; the number of people employed directly or indirectly must exceed that by at least eight times. In 1853 the Messrs. Tennant manufactured 19,000 tons of soda-ash, 7,000 tons of bleaching powder, and 2,000 tons of sulphuric acid, for sale, the quantity of sulphuric acid used in their own works being estimated at 14,000 tons a year. In 1854 they employed in their various manufactures 90,000 tons of coal, 30,000 of limestone, 17,000 of salt, 5,600 of sulphur, and 4,500 of manganese.—*Commercial Enterprise and Social Progress, or Gleanings in London, Sheffield, Glasgow, and Dublin* (London, 1858,, pp. 114–119.

* *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. iii., p. 549; *Glasgow Reminiscences*, p. 15. Mr. Ewing subsequently sold the ground, with an exhausted quarry adjoining, to the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway, for a guinea a square yard, some 35,000*l.* in all.

this proof of her son's affection. Going to Devonshire for the benefit of her health, she died there in 1815.

In that year, the fortieth of his life, James Ewing began to be, much more than previously, a public man. Some of the work hitherto done by his father as commercial arbitrator now fell to him. He also became a visible leader in every measure undertaken for the improvement of his native town. He was one of the founders of the Glasgow Bank—now known as the Union Bank of Scotland—which was just then being started at the instigation of his friend James Denniston. Though not officially connected with it, we are told, he was a chief promoter of the generous and prudent administration by which the bank was enabled to hold its ground in times of commercial depression, and to make rapid progress during the competition incident to prosperity; by which, too, 'many merchants and manufacturers, struggling in early life, but obtaining credit therefrom, have ultimately amassed vast fortunes, besides establishing their name and their fame, not only in their own city, but also in the most distant parts of the world.'* In another and perhaps a yet more commendable banking enterprise Ewing also interested himself. On the 19th of June, 1815, was opened a Provident or Savings Bank, the first of its kind in all Scotland, 'for the benefit of the lower orders of the community.'† Archibald Smith, of Jordanhill, was its first governor, James Ewing its deputy-governor. All who were not able to invest in larger undertakings were here invited to deposit their savings, from a shilling upwards. In the first year a hundred and fifty-seven accounts were opened and 1,608*l.* 10*s.* were received, and in every later year its operations were widely extended. Other kindred banks, all of them due to this successful one which Ewing was influential in establishing, were founded, and just fifty years after the commencement of the movement the united savings banks

* *Glasgow Reminiscences*, p. 6.

† *Ibid.*, p. 7; CLELAND, *Annals of Glasgow.*

of Glasgow contained upwards of 1,000,000*l.*, deposited by more than thirty thousand members of the working and smaller trading classes.*

In 1815, moreover, Ewing was elected Dean of Guild by the Merchants' House of Glasgow. The Merchants' House, established in 1605, for the encouragement of commerce and the protection of merchants, had lately lost some of its old dignity and influence. It still formed an integral part of the civic constitution of Glasgow; but the younger Chamber of Commerce, instituted by Patrick Colquhoun, afforded better means, where these were needed, for the encouragement and guidance of Glasgow trade, and another important intention of the founders of the House had been almost forgotten. Ewing set himself to revive it. "The primary object of the Merchants' House," he said, "was charity to its reduced members and their families." For more than two centuries 'mortifications,' as they were called in Scottish phraseology, had been accumulating, and too often allowed to accumulate, without any adequate fulfilment of the donors' wishes. Large sums were set apart for the support of various classes of poor persons; others were designed for the training, and advancement in the several branches of trade, of orphans and the children of poor parents; others, again, were intended to aid the sons of burgesses and others in acquiring a good university education. But none of these charities were efficiently distributed. Anticipating the time when he himself was to surpass all previous donors in beneficence, Ewing did his utmost to improve the existing administration of the Merchants' House, and in this he very notably succeeded. He also, both by direct argument and by that strongest of all arguments that comes from a good man's silent example, so quickened public interest in the Merchants' House that it attained a prosperity never equalled in any previous stage of its history. All the registered members of the institution

* Mackay, p. 32.

between 1604 and 1815 amounted only to six hundred and one. In the first year of Ewing's tenure of office the list was augmented by two hundred and twelve new members, and a hundred and fifty more were subsequently added. Every merchant and tradesman of repute in Glasgow, under Ewing's influence, sought a place in the House. It was reasonably said at the time that 'no Dean of Guild ever performed his duties to that House with more industry and fidelity than Mr. James Ewing.'* There was striking evidence of the zeal with which he applied himself to his duties in the fact that the merchant turned historian, and, in 1817, published a full and very interesting account of the progress of the Merchants' House from its foundation to the year 1816. By the members of the institution he was publicly thanked for 'the ability and research with which he had prepared this accurate, luminous, and valuable record.'†

The busy merchant was concerned in nearly every other measure for the advancement of Glasgow. In commercial and social, philanthropic and religious movements alike, he took the lead. In 1816 he was chosen Convener of the Committee of the City Council for regulating the High School of Glasgow, and in that capacity he procured the establishment of a new department of the school, wherein, while the old classical schemes of education were left intact, provision was made for the suitable training of lads intended for commercial life.‡ In 1817 he was elected President of the Andersonian University, an institution designed for the literary and scientific instruction of residents of Glasgow who were unable to attend the classes of the older and more legitimate University.§ In the same year he was also chairman of the Glasgow Marine Society, a director of the Glasgow Auxiliary Bible Society, a director of the Magdalen Hospital, and a director of the Glasgow Lunatic Asylum.

* MACKAY, pp. 26, 27, 112, 123, 124.
† *Ibid*, p. 28.
‡ *Glasgow Reminiscences*, p. 10.
§ MACKAY, p. 35.

These multifarious employments, however, were not allowed to interfere with Ewing's mercantile engagements. At this time he and his friend Finlay were leaders in the foreign trade of Glasgow. They worked together in attacking, with wonderful perseverance and force of argument, the East India Company's monopoly, Finlay using his influence especially as a member of Parliament and in London, Ewing working in Glasgow and with his pen. Several pamphlets, wise and weighty, were published by him on the subject. "The spirit of monopoly," he said, in one issued in 1818, "may now be considered as subdued. The eyes of the country are awakened to its pernicious influence. The sentiments of the legislature are expressed as to its erroneous principle. Its partial continuance has been tolerated only on the ground of alleged necessity; and if the commercial privileges still retained by the East India Company should survive the duration of their new charter, there can scarcely exist a doubt as to their subsequent dissolution. Other prospects yet remain. In a national point of view, the increase of the shipping will add to our maritime strength, and the extension of trade will augment our financial resources. To those who carry their ideas beyond either mercantile success or public prosperity, the free intercourse presents the gratifying hope of the mental, the moral, and the political improvement of the natives of India."* Thus, even when seeking to weaken the power of the East India Company in the interests of commerce, Ewing also kept in view, perhaps was chiefly influenced by, the prospect of a social and religious reformation, to be aided by the closer connection that would be brought about by the increased trade. His efforts, joined with like efforts made by the leading merchants of other towns, were successful, and his anticipations of the good to result therefrom have, in most respects, been fairly realized.

In overthrowing another sort of monopoly James Ewing also took the lead in this year, 1818. Deeming that all

* *Glasgow Reminiscences*, p. 11.

subjects of the British crown had a right to share alike in all municipal and political privileges, he strenuously advocated the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; and, that being the part of the general scheme of restriction which was most obnoxious to the people of Glasgow, he attacked with special vigour the burgess oath appointed by law to the Scottish towns. By the civil authorities of Glasgow he was appointed chairman of a committee whose business was to investigate the whole question, to correspond with all the other Scottish burghs, and to unite them in a determined opposition to the obnoxious oath. "It is due to the ages that are gone," said Ewing, in the report which he drew up on behalf of this committee, "neither to treat their institutions with irreverence nor to pass them over in neglect. But with every sense of the wisdom and zeal and prudence of our ancestors, it is incumbent upon us to exercise our own judgment, as they would themselves have done had they lived in the same era, and been placed in the same circumstances. Statutes and customs vary their character and lose their utility with the changes of times and manners, and the period has surely arrived when we may apply the hand of reform without the reproach of innovation." The hand of reform was applied, and, by the inhabitants of nearly every royal burgh in Scotland, Ewing was publicly thanked for his share in the removal of the oath.*

For his share in another kind of reform Ewing deserved yet heartier thanks. Between 1819 and 1822 he was chairman of a committee appointed to consider the state of prison management in Glasgow, and to secure its improvement. "The present Bridewell," he said, in shaping this committee's first report, in September, 1819, "has become altogether inadequate. It was erected in 1799, since which period the state of society has undergone a material alteration, as to the increase both of population and of crime. There are only a hundred and five cells for the reception

* Mackay, pp. 41–44; *Glasgow Reminiscences*, pp. 11–13.

of two hundred and ten prisoners. Solitary confinement has thus become impracticable, and the great object of a penitentiary has been rendered abortive. It is impossible to prevent the association of early vice with hardened depravity, and the institution, instead of being a school of reform, has thus been too often converted into a seminary of corruption. The wretches who enter its walls come out only to return to criminal habits, or to receive a final, awful, and ignominious doom. Therefore, a new Bridewell must be established, in which every chance of amendment will be afforded, and, by attention to industry, instruction, and morals, the victims of error may be reclaimed from the paths of ruin." On these representations it was agreed that the sanction of Parliament should be sought for the building of a new prison at a cost of 30,000*l.*, two-thirds being furnished by the county of Lanark, one-third by the city of Glasgow. The matter was under discussion for more than three years, and Ewing proceeded several times in the course of them to London, there not only to make interest with the Government and Parliament, but also to study the various systems of prison arrangement and decide upon the best. The result was the new County and City Bridewell, begun in 1822, and still considered the most perfect prison in the kingdom.*

'The Howard of Glasgow,' as Ewing was called, was not satisfied with that. Anxious to have criminals treated in the wisest way, he was yet more careful of the honest poor. "No subject," as he said himself, "is more delicate in its nature, or more difficult in its practice, than the best mode of providing for the poor. That the miserable ought to be relieved and the destitute supported, that those who are dibilitated by age, disabled by disease, or reduced by misfortune, should be assisted or sustained, is inculcated at once by religion, humanity, and expedience. But to aid indigence and suffering without encouraging indolence and

* *Glasgow Reminiscences*, pp. 19–21.

vice, to consult the sentiments of benevolence without encroaching on the dictates of policy, to maintain the unemployed population without interfering with industry and conferring a bounty on redundant increase, and, by discriminating between the causes of poverty, to administer the remedy not only to the extent but to the sources of the disease, is the most perplexing problem that can occur in civil or political institutions."* Ewing sought to solve the problem by close personal intercourse with the poor of Glasgow and by careful consultation with the foremost philanthropists of the district. As chairman of a committee of magistrates, he was especially concerned in the improvement of the Town's Hospital,† and during many years he was an energetic associate of Doctor Chalmers in all sorts of measures for improving the condition of the poor, and wisely directing the charities instituted on their behalf.

Full of care for the living, he was mindful also of the respect due to the dead. At his instigation, and after deliberations in which he was from first to last the chief mover, the Merchants' House set apart an ancient property, known as the Fir Park, very near to the Cathedral, as a place of burial for the citizens of Glasgow.‡ The little cemetery, now called the Glasgow Necropolis, has hardly an equal in Europe.

In its most conspicuous part is a statue of John Knox. Ewing was one of the principal subscribers to it, and at the laying of its foundation-stone, on the 22nd of September, 1825, he made a speech marked by the good sense that was common to all his utterances, and that lost none of its goodness from the occasional grandiloquence with which it was expressed. Therein he showed why, as a merchant, it behoved him to honour the memory of Knox and the other reformers. "It was at the Reformation," he said, "that light dawned on the human intellect, and dispelled the shades of bigotry and superstition. It was the Reformation, accom-

* *Glasgow Reminiscences*. p. 23. † *Ibid*., p. 22. ‡ *Ibid*., p. 27.

panied by the discovery of printing and the revival of letters, which unlocked the boundless stores of science and philosophy. It is to the Reformation we are indebted for the right of private judgment, and that free and happy constitution which is the best birthright, the noblest inheritance of Britons. It is the Reformation we have to thank for the wealth of the nation, which had previously been drained by the rapacity of a foreign priesthood. It is to the Reformation we must trace the sources of our commercial prosperity; for it was in Britain the arts found an asylum when expelled from other lands by the horrors of persecution. In place of convents, we now behold manufactories. In place of dissolute and ignorant monks, we behold a virtuous and enlightened clergy. In place of idle mendicants dependent on monasteries, we behold industrious artizans who would scorn subsistence but from their own labour."*

James Ewing made another famous speech two years later, on the 18th of December, 1827, in the presence of Henry Monteith, then Lord Provost of Glasgow, and a great crowd of merchants and citizens, when he laid the foundation-stone of the Royal Exchange. In its construction, as in everything else affecting the welfare of Glasgow, he was a zealous mover from first to last, and he was the largest subscriber to the sum of 60,000*l.* expended in producing one of the stateliest buildings of the kind in the United Kingdom, almost the chief ornament of Glasgow.†

The Royal Exchange was opened in 1829. On the 3rd of September, 1833, another notable monument of modern Glasgow commerce, the Jamaica, or Broomielaw, or Glasgow Bridge, known by all three names, was inaugurated. Here, too, the man chosen to lay the foundation-stone was James Ewing.‡

At that time he was in the enjoyment of the two highest honours that could be conferred upon him by his fellow-

* Mackay, p. 68. † *Glasgow Reminiscences*, pp. 26, 27.
‡ *Glasgow, Past and Present*, vol. i., p. 149.

citizens. He had been proposed for election as Lord Provost of Glasgow in 1820, but had declined the office. In 1832 he was elected again, and with such strong expression of feeling on the part of those who chose him, that he consented to occupy the post.* In like manner, at the election of members of Parliament, in 1830, though at first disposed to become a candidate for the Glasgow burghs, he had at once withdrawn from the contest on finding that his friend Kirkman Finlay was willing to stand, and with more certainty of success than any other advocate of liberal views. In 1832 there were no personal hindrances to his election, and, after a spirited contest, in which six candidates were engaged, his name was at the head of the poll, James Oswald being his fellow-representative of Glasgow, now for the first time an independent burgh in the reformed Parliament.†

He only held his seat, however, for two years. An honest Whig, he had advocated Parliamentary and municipal reform, and was in favour of abolition of the Corn-laws; but he was found to be not sufficiently a Radical for the electors of Glasgow, and he was defeated at the election consequent on the dissolution of Parliament and Lord Melbourne's resignation in 1834.‡

He was then nearly sixty years old, and rich enough to retire from city life. Twelve years before that he had made a step in the way of retirement by fixing his residence at Castle House, in Dunoon, on the Firth of Clyde.§ In 1835 he purchased the estate of Levenside, henceforth to be known as Strathleven, in Dumbartonshire. There he spent most of his later years in company with the young wife whom he married in 1836, finding health and amusement in the management of his estate. 'It was interesting,' says one of his friends, 'to see the activity and zeal of the new proprietor in determining upon the alterations and improve-

* *Glasgow Reminiscences*, pp. 16, 31; MACKAY, p. 80.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 32. § MACKAY, p. 95.

ments necessary to be made, and in carrying them forward. Had he been brought up from his youth to rural occupations and habits alone, he could not with more practical skill have instructed and conducted personally the changes needed, nor could they have been more speedily effected.'* He succeeded almost as well in farming as in the avocations of the merchant, and he was as generous and helpful to all who were dependent upon him in his new position as he had been to his associates in the trade of Glasgow. Having in his busiest times shown a taste for literary work, he now amused himself with antiquarian researches, and contributed two stout volumes, *The Chartulary of the See of Glasgow*, to the publications of the Maitland Club. In Glasgow and its affairs he took a lively interest to the last, often going to the city to give counsel to his friends in matters of commercial intricacy, or to join in the philanthropic movements that were always dear to his heart. His philanthropy was, to a remarkable extent, free from religious bigotry; but he was all through life a zealous member first of the Presbyterian Church, and then of the Free Church that seceded from it, showing, in his old age, the same spirit that made him an eager leader of family prayer in his boyhood.

He died in Glasgow, on the 29th of November, 1853, seventy-eight years old, and was buried in his favourite Necropolis.† Nine years before that he had made his will, bequeathing to various philanthropic and religious institutions a sum of 69,000*l.*, besides annuities of a yearly value of 1,060*l.*‡

* Mackay, p. 99. † *Ibid.*, p. 131.

‡ To the Dean of Guild and Directors of the Merchants' House he left 10,000*l.*, to be applied in pensions or presents to decayed Glasgow merchants; 10,000*l.* to be given to needy widows and daughters of merchants; and 10,000*l.* to be spent in educating and starting in business their sons. He assigned 10,000*l.* to the Glasgow Infirmary; 2,000*l.* each to the Glasgow Asylum for Lunatics, and to the House of Refuge in Glasgow; and 1,000*l* each to the Glasgow Blind Asylum, and to the Glasgow Deaf and Dumb Institution, besides numerous smaller bequests. To the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland he left 5,000*l.*, 'to be applied to the educating

A new generation of merchants had arisen in Glasgow before the death of James Ewing, of Strathleven; but few, if any, have acquired so large a fortune by exercise of their trade, and none have done so much either for the general well-being or for the commercial advancement of the town. Ewing's name is foremost among the great merchants who have made Glasgow second only to Liverpool as a centre of commerce with the East and the West Indies, America, and Australia, just as the earlier enterprise of men like David Dale and the Monteiths made it a formidable rival of Manchester in manufacturing energy.

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and training of young men for the ministry of the Free Church;' as well as 5,000*l.* towards the erection of a Free Church College at Glasgow, 2,000*l.* towards a similar building in Edinburgh, and several other benefactions to Free Church institutions. A sum of 4,500*l.* was assigned to various missionary societies.—*Glasgow Reminiscences*, pp. 35, 36.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE GURNEYS OF NORWICH AND LONDON.

[1600-1856.]

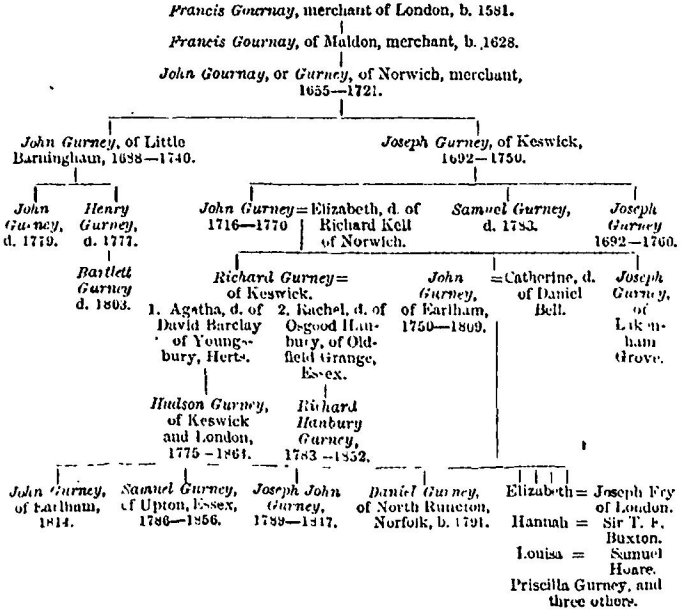
THE Gurneys hold a place almost unique in commercial biography. Nearly all the great merchants of the world have risen from the crowd by their own enterprise, and, beginning in small ways, have made places for themselves as successful traders and men of wealth and influence; and their sons or grandsons have generally abandoned the commerce that has helped them to distinction, eager to mix with those of rank and title older than their own, and willing, if they can, to forget by what means they have been enabled to enter the circle of aristocracy. A goodly number of the titled families of England owe their origin to old merchants and shopkeepers, but their modern representatives have nothing to do with trade. In the Gurneys we see the almost solitary instance of an ancient family that in later times has not been ashamed to engage in commerce, and has drawn from it a dignity as great as any that could come from lengthy pedigrees and the traditions of bygone ages.

They are descended from a Hugh de Gournay, Lord of Gournay and the adjacent Barony of Le Brai, who in 1054 commanded at the Battle of Mortimer, and in 1066 accompanied William the Conqueror to England. To him and his successors were made large grants of land in Norfolk, Suffolk, and elsewhere; and the Gournays were men of mark during the ensuing centuries. One of his descendants was Edmund Gournay, who held a situation analogous to that of

Recorder of Norwich, in the reign of Edward the Third; and from that time to this Norwich has always been the residence of some members of the family.* The most notable of his successors, as far as we are concerned, was a Francis Gournay, or Gurnay, who was born in 1581. He seems to have been a native of Great Ellingham, in Norfolk, where his father went to reside in 1574, and he married the daughter of a Norwich merchant; but the greater part of his life was spent in London. In 1606 he was made a member of the Guild of Merchant Tailors, and for some years he lived in Broad Street ward, in the parish of Saint Benet Finck, working as a merchant and sort of banker.†

* Gurney, *The Records of the House of Gournay* (London, privately printed, 1848, 1858), p. 507.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 503, 524, 529, 532A, 532B, 886. The following table shows the descent from Francis Gournay of those members of the family whose history most concerns us:—



There was another merchant of his name, and a much more famous man, living in London at the same time, though apparently not of the same family. Sir Richard Gurney was born at Croydon in 1577. He was apprenticed to Mr. Richard Coleby, a silkman in Cheapside, who so liked him that, at his death, he bequeathed to him his shop and a sum of 6,000*l.* Part of that money he spent in travelling through France and Italy, 'where,' says his old biographer, 'he improved himself, and by observing the trade of the respective marts as he passed, laid the foundation of his future traffic.' Soon after his return, it is added, being himself of no great family, he discreetly married 'into a family at that time commanding most of the money, and, by that, most of the nobility, gentry, and great tradesmen of England.' Thereby he became a great merchant and a very wealthy man. He was Sheriff of London in 1634, and Lord Mayor in 1641. He was a great benefactor to the Clothworkers' Company, of which he was a member and warden, and he gave freely to all sorts of City charities. He also, being a sturdy royalist, lent or gave immense sums of money to King Charles the First; at one time, on his Majesty's return from Scotland, spending 4,000*l.* in entertaining him. He was one of the great champions of Charles's cause in the City during the early part of the Commonwealth struggle. In 1640, when he was sixty-three years old, it is recorded 'one night, with thirty or forty lights and a few attendants, he rushed suddenly out of the house on thousands, with the City sword drawn, who immediately retired to their own houses and gave over their design.' This excess of loyalty, however, caused his ruin. In 1642 he was ejected from his mayoralty and lodged in the Tower. There, for refusing to pay the fine of 5,000*l.* oppointed by Parliament, he was kept a prisoner for seven years, and there he died in 1649.*

His contemporary, Francis Gournay, had his share of trouble. On the 17th of June, 1622, the corporation of Lynn lent to him and two partners of his a sum of 200*l.*, for

* A fragmentary biography cited by Mr. GURNEY, pp. 533–535.

'setting the poor to work within the town.' According to the terms of the agreement between them, the money was to be repaid in three years' time, and in the meanwhile Gournay was 'to freely provide, find, and deliver sufficient wool and other material to all those poor people dwelling within the borough who shall come to be set on work in spinning of worsted yarn.' He was also to instruct all the poor children who were sent to him in the spinning of wool; in fact, he was to do all he could to establish in the town a branch of the woollen manufacture that for some time past had formed the chief business of Norwich and its neighbourhood. Therein, however, he failed. Good churchmen attributed the failure to the circumstance that his factory was a desecrated church. A century before, it seems, the corporation of Lynn had received certain monasteries and ecclesiastical foundations during the spoliation under Henry the Eighth. One of these, the Church of Saint James, in Lynn, according to Sir Henry Spelman, was 'perverted to be a town house for the manufacture of stuffs, laces, and tradesmen's commodities, whereby they thought greatly to enrich their corporation and themselves. Great projects and good stocks, with a contribution from some country gentlemen, were raised for this purpose—two several times to my knowledge. But the success was that it came to nought, and all the money employed about new building and transforming the church hath only increased desolation; for so it hath stood during the whole time almost of my memory, till they lately attempted, by the undertaking of Mr. Francis Gournay and some artisans from London, to revive the enterprise of their predecessors; but speeding no better than they did, have now again, with loss of their money and expectation, left it to future ruin.'*

Whatever was the cause of it, Francis Gournay's experiment failed. He was not able to pay back the money he had borrowed from the corporation; and he seems to have been

* Spelman, *History and Fate of Sacrilege* (London, 1853), pp. 240, 241

in trouble, by reason of it, to the end of his life. His son, Francis, born in 1628, was a merchant or shopkeeper at Maldon, in Essex, and apparently a man of not much substance. But the fortunes of the house were revived by old Francis Gournay's grandson, John Gourney, or Gurney, of Norwich. He was born at Maldon on the 7th of October, 1655, and, as soon as he was old enough, was apprenticed to Daniel Gilman, a cordwainer of Norwich. For a time his business energies were restrained by the bigotry of his fellow-townsmen. Some five-and-twenty years after George Fox's public preaching of the doctrines of the Society of Friends, before 1678, at any rate, John Gurney became a convert to those doctrines. He was one of the fourteen hundred and sixty Quakers imprisoned on account of their religious opinions, and for three years he lay in Norwich Gaol. After that he was released; but still considerable difficulty arose through his refusal to take the freeman's oath required before he could be allowed to practise as a merchant within the city walls. At last, however, an exception was made in his favour, and for some thirty years or more he was a famous and very thriving merchant in Norwich, living at a house in Saint Gregory's parish. He was chiefly engaged in supplying with silk the Palatines and other foreign refugees who settled in Norwich and there carried on their old callings. That brought him into close connection with the great traders of the continent, among others, with the Hopes of Amsterdam, just then entering on their wonderful career of commercial prosperity. Like them, he added a sort of banking business to his occupations as a merchant. He was also a manufacturer. A brother of the Sir Thomas Lombe who established the celebrated silk-mill at Derby was a Quaker, and, for a time, a fellow-prisoner of Gurney's. Gurney afterwards bought of Sir Thomas some property that he possessed in Norwich, and placed thereon a silk-mill, imitated from that set up at Derby. In these ways he soon grew rich, being much aided in his business by his wife, Elizabeth

Swanton, whose brothers were merchants of Wells, in Norfolk. It was said, indeed, that Elizabeth Gurney had the greater business abilities of the two, and that she was the real founder of the commercial greatness of the Norwich Gurneys.* Be that as it may, the business prospered mightily, and when John Gurney died, in 1721, he left a goodly fortune and very profitable connections to his sons, John and Joseph,†

These sons were partners in the business, prosecuting it with considerable success. John Gurney, the younger, who was born on the 16th of July, 1688, and died on the 23rd of January, 1740, was a famous man in his day. He was an intimate friend of both the Walpoles, and by them urged to

* This amusing letter was addressed by her to her husband, while he was up in London, in 1716:—

"*Ffor John Gurney, Senr., att Theodore Ettleston's, in Crown Court, in Gracechurch Street, London.*

"Norwich, ye 17 of 3^d^ mo., 1716.

"My Deare,—Theise are to acquaint thee that I have drawn a bill on John Ettleston, to William Crowe, or order, for James Paynter. Thou told me he nor his father would want no money, but he have been with me twice for sum, but I had none for him nor nobody else. I never knew such a week of trade all the hard weather as I have known this week. I could have had some if Richard How had sent culord and the book muslin and those goods I have sent for; but when he have served all his customers, so that they have forestalled the market, then I shall have the rubbish they leave. I take it very ill that thou tye me to those people, for I am sure we are both sufferers by it. He know right well if there be anything to do, it is at this time of yeare, but I have been served so severall years. Branthwait have not sent me the money, nor Lilly have paid none, nor the country have sent none, nor I have taken scarce any; so I know not what they will do att John's. What pleasure thou meet withall at London much good may it doe thee; but I am sure I am in trouble enough. I can hardly tell how to forgive Richard How, to think how he have done by me. My neibour Alice desire thee to buy her 2 hundred of gold, and 2 pound of the best coffee. Pray desire John to think to buy me sum silk gloves of the maker, as I ordered him by my letter. So with deare love to thee and my children, I conclude,

"Thy discontented Wife at present,

"Eliz. Gurney.

"My daughter Hannah have now sent for me straight. Her child is taken very ill."—Gurney, p. 515.

† Gurney, pp. 504, 508, 511, 514, 515; 521, 541–543.

enter Parliament; but he preferred to devote himself to his business, and take all his relaxation at home.* In 1720 he was examined before the House of Lords concerning the intended prohibition of Indian calicoes, which had lately come to be freely imported into England. He drew a dismal picture of the evils consequent to the woollen trade from this innovation. Worcester and Gloucester, Bristol and York, he said, were being ruined through the preference that was being shown to cotton over woollen clothing. In York, 'the poverty of the manufacturers was so great that they were obliged to eat unwholesome diet, which had occasioned a distemper among them.' In Norwich, he represented, there was the greatest distress of all. Thousands of workpeople were thrown out of employment; and the paupers were so numerous, that the poor-rates, on many of the houses, were assessed at twenty-four shillings for every pound of rent. These arguments, and the arguments of other monopolists prevailed. A law was made in 1721 'to preserve and encourage the woollen and silk manufactures,' whereby all cotton clothing was forbidden, with a fine of 5*l.* for each offence upon the wearer, and 20*l.* on the seller; and John Gurney was henceforth known as 'the famous advocate of the weavers.'†

Joseph Gurney, four years younger than his brother, survived him by ten years. In 1747 he was rich enough to buy the Old Hall at Keswick.‡ His two elder sons, John and Samuel, succeeded him as merchants. They introduced into Norwich the Irish plan of making home-spun yarns, besides employing great numbers of native Irish, and were in their time accounted great benefactors both to the eastern counties of England and to the southern districts of Ireland.§ They sent great quantities of wool to Cork and its neighbourhood, to be there spun by hand, and then brought it back for

* Gurney, pp. 551, 555, 571.

† *Norwich Gazette*, April 20 to May 7, 1720; Anderson, *Origin of Commerce*, vol. iii., pp. 227, 228.

‡ Gurney, pp. 556, 562.

§ *Ibid*, pp. 562, 563.

sale to the Norfolk manufacturers. Samuel Gurney left only daughters, and John's three sons, Richard, John, and Joseph, soon retired from the mercantile business to become partners with their cousin, Bartlett Gurney, in the management of the Norwich Bank.

This Bank had been founded by John and Henry Gurney, sons of the John Gurney who had defended the woollen monopoly before the House of Lords in 1720. Succeeding their father as merchants, they followed the example of many other wealthy traders, and added an irregular banking business to their ordinary trade. Finding this a great source of further wealth, they at last devoted themselves exclusively to banking, and to that end converted their old house in Saint Augustine's parish into the original Norwich Bank, in 1770. From them the business descended in 1779 to Bartlett Gurney, Henry Gurney's son, and by him it was transferred to its present quarters, and enlarged by the admission of other partners, the principal being the three cousins already named, and they, after Bartlett Gurney's death in 1802, were its chief proprietors and managers.

Of the three, John Gurney, born in 1750, was perhaps the most remarkable.* Himself a good and useful man, he was the father of a famous family. One of his seven daughters was Elizabeth Fry, another married Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton. Of his four sons the most notable were Joseph John Gurney the philanthropist, and Samuel Gurney the millionaire.

Samuel, the one whose history most concerns us, was born at Earlham, near Norwich, on the 18th of October, 1786.

* His elder brother, Richard, was also a man of mark. Inheriting Keswick and the greater part of his father's fortune, he soon retired from business. His first wife was the daughter of David Barclay, the great banker and brewer, and to his eldest son, Hudson Gurney, descended a share in Barclay's Brewery, whence he derived great wealth. Hudson Gurney was a man of very great ability and very varied acquirements. He was for many years Member of Parliament. He died in 1864, having been for half a century the head of the Gurney family.

He was John Gurney's second son and ninth child. At the age of seven he was put to school with the Reverend John Henry Brown, a pupil of the celebrated Doctor Parr, and at fourteen he was apprenticed to the Clothworkers' Company in London, and placed in the counting-house, in Saint Mildred's Court, Poultry, in which his brother-in-law, Joseph Fry, who was also a partner in the bank of Frys and Chapman, carried on an extensive trade as a tea-merchant. 'He took to business and liked it,' according to the report of his niece, whose first remembrances of him were as an inmate in the Saint Mildred's Court household. 'In the counting-house as well as in domestic life he was extremely amiable and cheerful, and was beloved by the whole establishment. Although not brought up in conformity to the costume or speech of the Society of Friends, he showed no propensity to follow fashions or gaiety of appearance, beyond a suitable neatness of attire.'* From the very first, indeed, he seems to have been so thoroughly a man, or rather a boy, of business, as to have cared for no lighter occupations. In 1807, when his sister Hannah married Thomas Fowell Buxton, he went down to the wedding, but, it is recorded, was tired of the festivities long before they were over, and glad to get back to his book-keeping and money-changing.†

In the following year, however, Samuel Gurney was married himself, his wife being Elizabeth, the daughter of James Sheppard of Ham House, in Essex, a handsome residence that soon descended to the young couple and was their place of abode during nearly the whole of their married life.‡ The wealth that came to Samuel Gurney from his father-in-law, as well as that bequeathed to him by his father, who died in 1809, helped him to make rapid progress in the new business in which he had embarked a little while before, on his reaching the age of twenty-one.

The business had begun a few years earlier than that,

* Mrs. Geldart, *Memorials of Samuel Gurney* (London, 1857), pp. 9, 18.
† *Ibid.*, p. 16. ‡ *Ibid.*

growing out of a yet earlier connection between Joseph Smith, a wool factor in London, of the firm of Smith and Holt, and the Norwich Bank. Joseph Smith had found the advantage of applying part of his savings as a merchant to the then very slightly developed trade of bill-discounting, and John Gurney of Norwich, with whom he had been acquainted long before, when both were simply dealers in raw wool and manufactured cloths, also found the advantage of sending up to him some of the surplus money of the Norwich Bank, for investment in the same way, paying to Smith, as his commission, a quarter per cent. on the money laid out in each transaction. This arrangement having continued for some time, it occurred to Smith's confidential clerk, Thomas Richardson, by whom most of the bill business had been done, that there was room in London for a separate establishment devoted to trade in bills. He asked his employer to open an establishment of that sort, taking him as managing partner therein. This Joseph Smith refused to do, and Richardson resigned his clerkship in consequence. He found the Norwich Gurneys, however, more favourable to his project, and about the year 1800 the house of Richardson, Overend, and Company was founded, the management being divided between him and John Overend, formerly chief clerk in the bank of Smith, Payne, and Company. Simon Martin, an old clerk in the Norwich Bank, went to London to help build up the business and to watch its movements on behalf of the Bank, whence most of the money was obtained for investment. The enterprise throve wonderfully from the first, one great source of its popularity being the change introduced by the new firm, which charged the quarter per cent. commission against the borrowers of the money, instead of the lenders as heretofore; and in 1807 John Gurney added vastly to its strength by introducing his son Samuel as a partner. About that time Thomas Richardson retired from the business. It was carried on under the name of Overend and Company, even after John Overend's death, until the secret of its connection with the Norwich house

could no longer be kept, and it assumed its world-famous title of Overend, Gurney, and Company.

Its prosperity was in some measure the cause, but in much greater measure the consequence, of the new views on banking and trade in money that were adopted in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Banking, which had existed in some other countries for a long time before, came into fashion in England about the middle of the seventeenth century. Of the foundation of the Bank of England, at William Paterson's suggestion, in 1694, we have already seen something. It immediately proved very helpful to British commerce in lowering the rate of interest for borrowed money, strengthening all sorts of financial operations, and in other ways giving encouragement to every branch of trade and industry. The Bank of England, however, was from the first, and is to this day, only a private bank on a large scale, endowed with special privileges on account of its loans to the Government, amounting at its foundation to 1,200,000*l.*, and now to upwards of 11,000,000*l.* Its first charter offered no obstacle to the establishment of other like institutions, and no law could ever be passed preventing private individuals from following the banker's trade. But in 1709 the governors of the Bank obtained an Act forbidding the formation of any banks of issue under more than six proprietors, and so secured for themselves a practical monopoly in joint-stock banking. Their company was allowed to issue paper money to the extent of its loans to the State; but no paper money not covered by Government securities was allowed, and the quantity issued could not be forced on people against their will. During the eighteenth century a great number of other banks were formed, both in London and in the country. In 1750 there were in England hardly a dozen bankers out of London; in 1793 there were more than four hundred. Scotland also, untouched by the law in favour of the Bank of England, had three joint-stock banks, with branches in various parts, besides a great number of private establishments. These banks, growing out of the

commercial prosperity of the country, helped the tide of speculation which, if it might have been fortunate in times of peace, led to terrible failures on the revival of a European war and the disasters consequent thereupon. In 1784 there were in circulation six millions of bank-notes, that is, of the paper vouchers given by bankers for the money deposited with them, which in those days took the place for ordinary trading purposes of the modern cheques. In 1792 the number had risen to nearly eleven millions and a half. Next year war was declared between England and France, and in the panic that ensued at least one-fourth of the English country banks stopped payment, most of the others being grievously shaken. The London banks also suffered considerably, the suffering being everywhere attributed in great measure to the restrictive policy of the directors of the Bank of England, who, in spite of the advice of the Government and the prayers of thousands of merchants and manufacturers, sought to strengthen their own position by issuing as little money as they possibly could for the assistance of their neighbours. For this their best excuse was in the fact that their resources had been, and continued to be yet more and more, materially crippled by the immense drains made upon them by Government on account of the expenses of its continental wars. In October, 1795, the directors, brought almost to bankruptcy, informed Pitt that they could not hold out much longer. Other messages followed, and at last, in February, 1797, the Bank was authorised by the Privy Council to refuse cash payment for its notes, or the issue of any coin in sums larger than twenty shillings. In the following May an Act was passed enforcing that resolution, and sanctioning an almost unlimited issue of notes. Sheridan declared it 'a farce to call that a bank whose promise to pay on demand was paid by another promise to pay at some undefined period,' and Sir William Pulteney introduced a bill 'for the erection of a new bank in case the Bank of England did not pay in specie on or before the 24th of June, 1798.' But this opposition was ineffectual, and the Bank

Restriction Act remained in force for two-and-twenty years, without any serious attempt at overturning the monopoly of the Bank of England.

Great advantage sprang from this Restriction Act through its encouragement of sound and enlightened views as to the value of paper money and the nature of credit; but, while it lasted, it also brought serious mischief by its depreciation of the bank note in value to the extent, at one time, of from 25 to 30 per cent. Almost the greatest of the many great benefits conferred on commerce by Sir Robert Peel was his Act of 1819, abolishing the restrictions on gold and silver currency and the forced issue of paper money. The directors of the Bank of England were still allowed to issue as many notes as they chose, but they were compelled to exchange them for gold on demand, and thus were virtually prohibited from giving out more than the public felt it safe to take at the full price of their equivalent in bullion. This was a national avowal of the principle that money, that is, the circulating medium, is not gold and silver alone, but gold, silver, paper, and anything else which can be regarded as a trustworthy agent in the interchange of commodities, and the bartering of capital, labour, and the like.

This was the principle which gave vitality to such concerns as the one of which Samuel Gurney was for a long time the head, and which, not a little through his help, has been great source of extension to modern commerce. "Credit," said Daniel Webster, "has done more a thousand times to enrich nations than all the mines of all the world." Were we forced now to carry on all our commercial dealings by means of gold and silver, it would only be possible, in spite of the increase of our stores of these metals, to continue a very small portion of our present trade. This, however, no one now attempts to do. The legal currency, whether gold, silver, or bank-notes, is only a sort of pocket-money in comparison with the real currency of trade. It serves for the smaller sort of retail purchases, for payments across the counter and the like; but the great merchant has not in his

possession all through his lifetime actual money equal in amount to the paper equivalent of money that passes through his hands every day of the week. All his important business is carried on exclusively by means of bills, bonds, cheques, and the other materials included in the terms 'commercial debt' and 'credit.' His ready money is lodged with a banker, as has been the practice since the beginning of the eighteenth century, except that now he draws cheques for so much as he needs for use from time to time, instead of receiving from his banker a number of promissory notes, to be passed to and fro, while the actual deposit was in the banker's hands to be used in whatever safe and profitable way he chose. Now, however, the cheques are in comparatively few cases exchanged for real money, they being piled up by the bankers, into whose hands they come, and paired off one with another, or in heaps together, while the deposits that they represent are left untouched. In this way the money does double work, being itself available for use by the banker or his agents, while the equivalent cheques are quite as serviceable for all the purposes of trade. And this is only the simplest instance of the modern principle of credit. In all sorts of ways, every bit of money and everything else that can be taken as a representative of wealth, whether actual or prospective, is turned over and over, each turning being a creation, to all intents and purposes, of so much fresh money. A merchant, for example, buy 1,000*l.*'s worth of goods for export, say to India, China, or Australia. He pays for the same by means of a bill of exchange, accepted as soon as possible, but not payable till two or three months after date. The manufacturer or agent of whom he buys the goods, however, does not wait all that time for his money. In all probability he immediately gets the bill discounted, thereby losing some 15*l.* or 20*l.*, but having the sum of 980*l.* or 985*l.* available for appropriation in other ways, and thus for the acquisition of fresh profits. Before the original bill falls due he has built perhaps twenty fresh transactions on the basis of the first one, and so, in effect,

has turned his 1,000*l.* into 20,000*l.*, less the 300*l.* or 400*l.* that have been deducted by the bill-broker as discount. And the same orginal transaction has been made the groundwork of a number of other transactions on the part of the merchant who bought the goods. He bought them for 1,000*l.*, to sell again for say 1,200*l.*, part of the difference being his profit, part being absorbed in freight, insurance, and so forth. He is not likely to be paid for the goods in less than six months' time; and he has to pay for them in two or three months. But long before either of those terms expires he has raised part of the money on the security of his bill of lading, and so is enabled to enter on other transactions, just as the manufacturer had done. In such ways as these, and they are numberless, a very small amount of actual money goes to the building up, on the one side, of a vast structure of credit, and, on the other, of a vast structure of commerce.

There was a hazy comprehension of this system long centuries ago. "If you were ignorant of this, that credit is the greatest capital of all towards the acquisition of wealth," said Demosthenes, "you would be utterly ignorant." But the modern theory of credit is very modern indeed, having almost its first exemplification, on a large scale, in the establishment of Overend, Gurney, and Company. This house, as we saw, was established to make a separate business of bill-discounting, much more complete and extensive than the chance trade in bills that had formerly been, and that continued to be, carried on by bankers, merchants, and all sorts of irregular money-lenders. Very soon after the time of Samuel Gurney's supremacy in it, it began to assume gigantic proportions, and it was, for some thirty or forty years, the greatest discounting house in the world, the parent of all the later and rival establishments that have started up in London and elsewhere. At first only discounting bills, its founders soon saw the advantage of lending money on all sorts of other securities, and their cellars came to be loaded with a constantly varying heap of dock-warrants, bills of

lading, shares in railways and public companies, and the like. To do this, of course, vast funds were necessary, very much in excess of the immense wealth accumulated by the Gurneys in Norwich and elsewhere. Therefore, having proved the value and stability of his business, Samuel Gurney easily persuaded those who had money to invest to place it in his hands, they receiving for the same a fixed and fair return of interest, and he obtaining with it as much extra profit as the fluctuations of the money market and the increasing needs of trade made possible. He became, in fact, a new sort of merchant, buying credit—that is, borrowing money—on the one hand, and selling credit—that is, lending money—on the other, and deriving from the trade his full share of profits.

Great help came to his money-making and to his commercial influence from the panic of 1825. That panic arose partly from the financial disorganization consequent on the enforcement of Sir Robert Peel's Act of 1819, very good in itself but promotive of much trouble until it had brought matters into a healthy condition. Its more immediate cause, however, was the excessive speculation in joint-stock companies at home as well as in continental mines, American cotton, and other branches of foreign commerce.* Several

* This is an enumeration of the joint-stock companies projected in 1824 and 1825, the great years of joint-stock-company mania :—

		Capital.
74	Mining Companies	£38,370,000
29	Gas ditto	12,077,000
20	Insurance ditto	35,820,000
28	Investment ditto	52,600,000
54	Canal and Railroad ditto	44,051,000
67	Steam ditto	8,555,500
11	Trading ditto	10,450,000
26	Building ditto	13,781,000
23	Provision ditto	8,360,000
292	Miscellaneous ditto	148,108,600
624		£372,173,100

Of these, however, only 245 companies were actually formed, and the actual capital paid up amounted to only £17,605,625.—English, *Complete View of the Joint Stock Companies formed during* 1824 *and* 1825 (London, 1827), pp. 29, 31.

London banks failed, and at least eighty country banks fell to the ground, the Bank of England itself being only saved by the accidental finding of two million one-pound notes that had been packed away and lost sight of some time before. Even Joseph John Gurney, much more of a philanthropist than a banker, suffered from the pressure. "Business has been productive of trial to me," he wrote in characteristic way in his journal, "and has led me to reflect on the equity of God, who measures out His salutary chastisement, even in this world, to the rich as well as the poor. I can certainly testify that some of the greatest pains and most burdensome cares which I have had to endure have arisen out of being what is usually called a 'monied man.'" *

His brother, however, was much more mixed up in the turmoil. 'Knowing intimately as he did the sufferings which awaited those who could no longer command credit or obtain supplies from other quarters,' said one of Samuel Gurney's old friends, 'his anxiety was felt more on others' account than his own,'—the fact being that his own financial dealings were so sound that he had no fear for himself, and only had to settle how to make most money with most secondary advantage to those he dealt with. 'His desire,' it is added, 'was to act fairly and justly to his fellow-creatures, as well as to himself; and thus did he move onwards cautiously and step by step through those troublous times, lest he should lead any into error by his judgment. It was a remarkable sight to witness him plunge day by day into the vortex of City business and return thence to his own domestic hearth without any trace of a mammon-loving spirit.'†

We can well believe that the honest Quaker was reasonably free from the 'mammon-loving spirit;' but he knew well how to seek and secure his own advancement, and this he did very notably, by lending to many houses money enough to enable them to ride through their difficulties, and so

* Braithwaite, *Memoirs of Joseph John Gurney* Norwich, 1854), vol. i.
† Geldart, pp. 28, 29.

bringing to himself much favour and much new custom during the following years. From this time forth he came to be known as a banker's banker, taking the place, for many, of the Bank of England. Hundreds of private banks fell into the way of sending him, from time to time, their surplus cash, finding that they were as sure of getting it back whenever they wanted it, as if they had lodged it in the Bank of England, and that in the meanwhile they were getting higher interest for it than the Bank would have granted. "We do not feel the slightest dependence upon the Bank of England," said one of the number, Mr. Robert Carr Glynn, before the Bank Charter Committee in 1832, "nor do we feel the slightest obligation to it in any way."

Samuel Gurney was thus the cause of an injury to the Bank of England for which he was not easily forgiven. And in other ways the old Bank privileges were being assailed during these years. In 1826 an Act was passed sanctioning the establishment of joint-stock banks throughout the country, except in London and within a distance of sixty-five miles thereof. "The present system of law as to banks," said Lord Liverpool, in supporting the measure, "must now be altered in one way or another. It is the most absurd, the most inefficient legislation. It has not one recommendation to stand upon. The present system is one of the fullest liberty as to what is rotten and bad, but of the most complete restriction as to all that is good. By it a cobbler, or a cheesemonger, may issue his notes, without any proof of his ability to meet them, and unrestricted by any check whatever; while, on the other hand, more than six persons, however respectable, are not permitted to become partners in a bank with whose notes the whole business of the country might be transacted. Altogether the whole system is so absurd, both in theory and practice, that it would not appear to deserve the slightest support if it was attentively considered even for a single moment." It would certainly have

been altered long before, but for the influence of the Bank of England directors, eager to have as much of a monopoly as possible in their own hands. This bill, permitting joint-stock banks at a distance, however, was passed in 1826, and a few years later the wonderful discovery was made that joint-stock banks were legal even in London, and had been so from the beginning. James William Gilbart, having begun life as a banker's clerk in 1813 and, after twelve years so spent, having gained fresh experience and influence in Ireland, pointed out that the Act of 1709, while forbidding joint-stock banks of issue, offered no obstacle to joint-stock banks of deposit. The consequence was the immediate formation of the London and Westminster Bank in 1833. Before that bank was fairly established, however, Parliament had complied with the demands of the free traders in money and passed a bill intended to give legal countenance to the institutions against which it was found that there was no legal prohibition. Therein it was 'declared and enacted that any body politic or corporate, or society, or company, or partnership, although consisting of more than six persons, might carry on the trade or business of banking in London or within sixty-five miles thereof.' That was a full concession of the grand point at issue. Other matters of dispute arose, and for the first four years of its history the London and Westminster Bank was in constant altercation and litigation. But at last common sense prevailed, and the London and Westminster Bank not only entered itself upon a career of wonderful prosperity, but also became the parent of a number of other joint-stock banks, destined in due time, we may fairly believe, altogether to supersede the older private banks.

It was really to atone for that apparent infringement of the Bank's monopoly, though ostensibly, according to the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the day, 'to prevent, as much as possible, fluctuations in the currency, of the nature of those which have, at different times, occasioned hazard to

the Bank and embarrassment to the country,' that the Bank Charter Act of 1844 was passed. Sir Robert Peel entered heartily into the work, thinking that thus he would complete the financial reform begun by his Act of 1819, and in some of the wealthiest bank directors he had very eloquent and persuasive guides. Part of the new Charter was unquestionably beneficial. By it the Bank was separated into two distinct establishments, one solely for issuing bank-notes, the other for transacting ordinary business. The banking department is only a huge joint-stock bank, and deals with the public just in the same way as do the London and Westminster Bank or Coutts's or Child's Bank. The issue department, subsidized by Government, receives all the bullion intended to be held in reserve, and promulgates an exact equivalent for it in bank-notes, issuing also paper money, for which there is no corresponding bullion, to the extent of 14,650,000*l.*, on the security of Government debts and other securities endorsed by Government. Whether the Bank Charter has on the whole been helpful to the progress of commerce need not here be discussed. It has been, beyond all question, very helpful to the Bank and to the many wealthy men whose wealth has brought them into connection with it.

Among these, though as wealthy as any, Samuel Gurney was not reckoned. His house was too much in rivalry with one branch of the Bank of England's business for him to have more connection with it than was necessary. He took no prominent part, therefore, either in favour or in disapproval of the reconstruction of the Bank Charter in 1844. But he was as zealous as any of the men in office in Threadneedle Street in his opposition to the movement in favour of joint-stock undertakings. It may be that in this he was somewhat influenced by his anticipations of the rivalry that would come through them to the vast business that he had formed.

The only rivals that appeared during his lifetime, however,

were private speculators. Of these, the first was Richard Sanderson, originally a clerk of his own. After learning the mystery of successful money-lending in the house of Overend, Gurney, and Company, Sanderson started in business for himself. He married a daughter of Lord Canterbury's, and became a Member of Parliament, thus advancing his social position, but perhaps damaging his commercial prospects. He failed in 1847; soon revived the business in partnership with a Mr. Sandeman, and therein prospered for a few years, to fail again in 1857. More uniformly successful was another and younger bill-broker, a Mr. Alexander, who had for some time been a clerk in the banking-house of Robarts, Curtis, and Company. In 1856, the year of Samuel Gurney's death, it was estimated that Overend, Gurney, and Company held deposits amounting to 8,000,000*l.*, while Alexander and Company were in possession of documents valued at 4,000,000*l.*, and Sanderson and Sandeman of 3,500,000*l.*'s worth of paper; the wealth of the three houses together being no less than 15,500,000*l.**

During many years before that, Samuel Gurney had had very little to do with the business, its chief management being then in the hands of Mr. David Barclay Chapman. While he was young and vigorous, Gurney made money-getting his one grand business. It is said of him that when once an elder friend warned him against too close attention to the things of this world, he replied that he could not help himself; he could not live without his business.† During the last ten or twelve years of his life, however, he left nearly all the management in the hands of others, and found his occupation in enjoyment of his princely fortune and application to various charitable and philanthropic undertakings. Charitable he had been all through his life. 'Many are the solid remembrances of the more prominent features of Mr. Gurney's charities,' says his very friendly biographer; 'but besides those deeds more generally known to

* GILBART, *Logic of Banking.* † GELDART, p. 43.

the public, there were many lesser streams of silent benevolence still flowing from the fountain of love to God and man, which spread refreshment around. To many members of his large family his kindly aid was given; and it might be said that not only there, but elsewhere, he was wonderfully gifted both with the will and with the power to help. Besides his efficiency in action, his very presence seemed to impart strength, courage, and calm in any emergency, whilst his practical wisdom, his clear and decisive mind and noble spirit of charity led many to bring cases of difficulty before him, knowing from experience how sure and effective was his aid. It may be truly said of Samuel Gurney that he loved to do good service, whether by advice or money—by his sound judgment or well-apportioned aid. He really took trouble to serve his fellow-creatures, and a narration of his mere alms-giving, extensive as it was, would give a very limited idea of the good he effected during the journey of life.'* Through the time of his greatest wealth he is reported to have spent 10,000*l.* a year in charities, and one year, it is said, the amount exceeded 16,000*l.*†

Many are the records of his kindly disposition, shown in little ways and great. 'One afternoon,' says one of his clerks, 'as Mr. Gurney was leaving Lombard Street, I saw him taking up a large hamper of game, to carry to his carriage. I immediately came forward and took it from him. He looked pleased, and in his powerful and hearty voice, exclaimed, "Dost thou know H——'s in Leadenhall Market?" I replied in the affirmative. "Then go there and order thyself a right down good turkey, and put it down to my account." '‡

A more important instance of his generosity is in the circumstance that when, on one occasion, a forgery had been committed to the injury of his Lombard Street house, and the culprit lay in prison with clear proof of guilt, Gurney

* Geldart, p. 81. † *Essex Standard*, July 2, 1856.
‡ Geldart, p. 82.

refused to prosecute him, and so obtained his release.* At another time, we are told, 'one of the silversmiths in the City, and a man of high esteem for his uprightness, was accused of forgery. The excitement as to the probable result of this inquiry was intense, and the opinions of men differed widely. On the morning of the decisive day,' says the merchant who tells the story, 'I chanced to hear that my friend Gurney was prepared to stand by the prisoner in the dock. I immediately proceeded to Lombard Street, where I found him occupied with the vast interests of his business, and asked him hastily whether common report were true. Upon which he said, "After a most anxious investigation of the matter, I am firmly convinced of that man's innocence. I deem it my duty to express this conviction publicly, and will join him in the felon's dock." And most assuredly he went; nor could any one easily forget the intense sensation produced in the crowd of spectators when, on the prisoner being conducted to his place, the stately figure of Samuel Gurney presented itself to the public gaze by the side of the innocent silversmith.'†

In mitigation of the laws regarding forgery, in company with his brother-in-law, Thomas Fowell Buxton, Samuel Gurney first showed himself to the world as a philanthropist. He also took a lively interest in all plans for improving and increasing refuges and reformatories. He was for many years, after the death of William Allen, treasurer to the British and Foreign School Society; and to other like institutions he was always a good friend. Visiting Ireland in 1849, he astonished the inhabitants by the liberality with which he drained his purse to relieve them, as far as he could, amid their sufferings from the potato famine. At Ballina he found the town so full of paupers that there were none able to pay poor-rates, and the workhouse was consequently bankrupt. "I found an execution put into it," he said in

* Geldart, p. 37.

† From a letter of M. Bunsen's, cited by Mrs. Geldart, pp. 40, 41.

one of his letters, "and all the stock furniture is to be sold off this week, when the poor will have to lie on straw, and the guardians must feed them as well as they can." He bought up the whole of the furniture for 200*l.*, in order that, being his property, it might be saved from the creditors.*

In 1848 Gurney gave 1,000*l.* to the government of Liberia, and he always took great interest in the prosperity of the little colony of freed slaves. Nor was he, like some anti-slavery worthies, careful only for the freedom of the blacks. In 1852 he sent a petition to the King of Prussia, on behalf of his dissenting subjects, praying that full religious liberty might be accorded them. The King answered that he did not mean to do anything that could distress 'his good friend Gurney.'†

Gurney was not a bigot. Some one having written to him, in 1855, complaining of the way in which Fox and Penn had been spoken of by Lord Macaulay, in his *History of England*, he answered thus:—"It *is* a little mortifying that Macaulay should so have held up our honourable predecessors; not that they were perfect, or were ever held up as such, as far as I know; but they were extraordinary men, wonderfully elucidating and maintaining the truth. I am not prepared, however, to say that Fox was clear of eccentricities, and that, at times, he was not, to a certain extent, under such influence on his conduct; but, taking him for all in all, he was wonderfully gifted and enlightened. It will probably be considered by Friends whether there should be an answer somewhat official to these attacks on our two worthies. I rather lean to it, although it would be impossible to reach wherever Macaulay's book may go; yet, if well done, it might have a beneficial effect upon the public mind, and upon our young people. There is, however, one consolation. 'The truth as it is in Jesus,'—the truth as maintained by Friends,—is unchangeable, and remains the

* Geldart, pp. 75, 84, 85. † *Ibid.*, p. 97.

same, however feeble, or even faulty, its supporters may have been and are."*

That letter was written from Nice, whither Samuel Gurney had gone very soon after the death of his wife, hoping to improve the health that had been greatly shattered by his loss and the anxiety that preceded it. But in that he was mistaken. Growing worse in the spring of 1856, he hurried homewards, hoping to end his days in his own country and among his kindred. He reached Paris, but could go no further. There he died, on the 5th of June, 1856, seventy years of age, and one of the richest and most envied men in Europe.

The commercial establishment which he had brought to a position of unexampled wealth and influence, after passing into other and less competent hands, was reorganized as a joint-stock company, under the Limited Liability Act, in August, 1865, and failed on the 10th of May, 1866.†

* GELDART, p. 119.

† Here let me supply omissions in previous pages by stating that I have derived some information concerning Bank history from Mr. H. D. MACLEOD'S *Theory and Practice of Banking*; and have been to a small extent helped in my personal account of Samuel Gurney by Mr. MARTIN'S *Stories of Banks and Bankers.*

CHAPTER XXIX.

RICHARD COBDEN AND THE COMMERCE OF THE PRESENT.

[1804-1865.]

FAR above all other names stands that of Richard Cobden, as representative of the principles by means of which English commerce has reached its present vast proportions. He was hardly a merchant himself during the most notable years of his life, and commerce never brought him a thousandth part of the wealth with which it has enriched many of its systematic votaries; but no other man of the nineteenth century has done as much for the mercantile and manufacturing advancement of the nation, and no one in any century has done better service to the world in widening the channels of trade, and in guiding it so as to confer most benefits on all classes of the people. "It is many years," said Lord Palmerston, in the House of Commons, on the 3rd of April, 1865, the day after Cobden's death—"it is many years since Adam Smith elaborately and conclusively, as far as argument could go, advocated, as the fundamental principle of the wealth of nations, the freedom of industry, and the unrestricted exchange of the objects and results of industry. These doctrines were inculcated by learned men, by Dugald Stewart, and others, and were taken up in process of time by leading statesmen, such as Huskisson, and those who agreed with him. But the barriers which long-associated prejudice—honest and conscientious pre-

judice—had raised against the practical application of these doctrines for a great number of years, prevented their coming into use as instruments of progress to the country. To Mr. Cobden it was reserved, by his untiring industry, his indefatigable personal activity, the indomitable energy of his mind, and by that forcible Demosthenic eloquence with which he treated all subjects he took in hand—I say it was reserved for Mr. Cobden, by exertions which were never surpassed, to carry into practical application those abstract principles, with the truth of which he was so deeply impressed, and which at last gained the acceptance of all reasonable men in the country."* And that was only the most notable of the many services which the good man did for his country.

He was born at Dunford farmhouse, near Midhurst, in Sussex, on the 3rd of June, 1804. In Midhurst and its neighbourhood his ancestors and namesakes had lived and worked for many previous centuries. A Thomas Cobden was Member of Parliament for Chichester in 1313.† In 1562 died a William Cobden, possessed of lands in West Dean, and part owner of the Hospital of Arundel.‡ In 1588 another Thomas Cobden contributed a sum of 25*l.* towards the extraordinary loan set on foot for the defence of the country against the Spanish Armada, John Shelley, of Michelgrove, the father of the first baronet of that name, being a subscriber to the amount of 40*l.*§ A little later, in 1629, another Cobden was fined for his refusal to attend the coronation of Charles the First, and there be knighted—that is, pay the exorbitant fees then claimed in return for a knighthood—seeing that he was owner of lands worth 40*l.* a year; and in 1734, as owner of that same property, a William Cobden voted at a county election, a Richard

* *Times*, April 4, 1865.
† *British Quarterly Review*, January, 1866, p. 3.
‡ *Sussex Archæological Collections*, vol. xvi., p. 51.
§ *Times*, April 26, 1865.

Cobden voting at the same election, as possessor of a freehold at Midhurst.* That Richard Cobden was the grandfather or great-grandfather of the Richard Cobden of our own times. But Cobden did not care about pedigrees, and valued himself only for what could be done by his own quick wit and steady perseverance.

His father farmed his own little piece of land, and it was intended that he should follow in his steps. But the father died while Richard was still a lad, and, therefore, after some respectable training, first at Midhurst Grammar School, and afterwards, for three years, at a private school in Yorkshire, he was taken as a clerk into the office of one of his uncles, a well-to-do warehouseman in Eastcheap.†

He was then sixteen years old, and zealous in his efforts to supplement the learning he had gained at school by all the evening reading and study that he could compass. 'The knowledge derivable from books,' says the friend who relates the circumstance, 'was regarded at that time as wholly out of place in a youth bound to follow business and nothing else. There might be nothing actually wrong in his skimming through a novel once in a way; and of course it was all right to read a chapter or a psalm on a Sunday night before going to bed. But as for study of any kind, or the collecting of information, even about trade, from books, pamphlets, or newspapers, the thing was deemed an absurdity or an affectation; and when the beardless youth betrayed leanings that way, he incurred at first pity for his want of sense, and then reproof for his obdurate wilfulness in thus misusing his time.' Luckily for himself, and for the world, however, he still went his way, working hard and well by daylight and by dusk, and never neglecting the business of his relative till the doors of the warehouse closed. But when his companions had betaken themselves to the amusements befitting their time of life, or were glad to enjoy an early sleep, he loved to occupy himself with such books of

* *Times*, April 27, 1865. † *British Quarterly Review*, pp. 4, 5.

travel, biography, and history as his limited opportunities enabled him to obtain; and very early his mind became attracted by the study of those branches of knowledge which furnish the materials of industrial philosophy.'*

He soon left his uncle's warehouse, to take a similar position, though one perhaps in which he was more able to follow his studious inclinations, at a house in Watling Street. There, after a while, he was requested, during the illness of one of the commercial travellers, to perform his duties; and therein he succeeded so well that he obtained permanent employment as a bagman.† He carried his studies with him. One of his proposals, made half in earnest and half in mockery of the dispositions of most of his associates on 'the road,' was that they should join him in founding a Smithian Society, especially devoted, on the plan of the Linnean and other societies, to the study of political economy and the development and extension of the doctrines of Adam Smith.‡ For all that, he was a favourite with his companions on account of his genial ways, and a favourite with his employers by reason of the success with which he did all the business intrusted to him.

He ceased to be a commercial traveller, and began business on his own account in 1830, when he was only twenty-six years old. In that year he heard of a business near Manchester, the plant of which was to be sold for 1,500*l.* Cobden had no money of his own, and no friends save those he had made for himself in the way of business. These, however, were many, and to one of them, a John Lewis, of 101, Oxford Street, in Manchester, he applied for help. It was proposed that Cobden and two of his fellow clerks should provide 500*l.* a piece. The other two young men agreed to do their shares, and Lewis promised to lend Cobden

* *British Quarterly Review*, pp. 5, 6.

† *Manchester City News*, April 8, 1865.

‡ M'Gilchrist, *Richard Cobden, the Apostle of Free Trade, His Political Career and Public Services* (London, 1865), p. 13.

his part of the money. 'Cobden left him in high spirits,' says the friend to whom Lewis afterwards told the story; 'but soon after he called again, with a long face, to say his colleagues had not been able to raise their 500*l.* each. After a while, however, he came again, to state that the owner of the business in question, having heard favourably of the trio, agreed to let them have it for Mr. Cobden's 500*l.* Would Mr. Lewis still let him have the money? Mr. Lewis very kindly complied, and the three shortly after began the world together. The 500*l.* was speedily repaid; and, after a very few years, one and then another of the partners drew out of the business with a handsome fortune, and Richard Cobden came to be what he was.'*

Three separate establishments grew out of the enterprise that had that unusual and almost romantic beginning. At Saleden, near Clitheroe, were the Calico Print Works, carried on under the name of Sheriff, Foster, and Company; and the goods there manufactured were sold by Sheriff, Gillet, and Company in London, and by Richard Cobden and Company in Manchester, the warehouses of the latter branch being in Moseley Street. Cobden, however, was the life and soul of all three concerns. 'The custom of the calico trade at that period, we are told, was to print a few designs, and watch cautiously and carefully those which were most acceptable to the public, when large quantities of those which seemed to be preferred were printed off and offered to the retail dealers. Mr. Cobden introduced a new mode of business. Possessed of great taste, of excellent tact, and remarkable knowledge of the trade in all its details, he and his partners did not follow the cautious and slow policy of their predecessors, but fixing themselves upon the best designs they had these printed off at once, and pushed the sale energetically throughout the country. Those pieces which failed to take in the home market were at once shipped to other countries, and the consequence was that the

* *Manchester Courier*, April 10, 1865.

associated firms became very prosperous.' The 'Cobden prints' grew famous, and within four years of the Moseley Street warehouse being opened, Cobden's share of the profits was supposed to amount to 9,000*l.* a year.*

Had he chosen to be a merchant and manufacturer, and nothing more, he would doubtless soon have become as rich a man as could be found in Manchester; but from the first he set before him worthier objects of pursuit than wealth. During the first few years of his residence in Manchester, the years of angry battling and loud congratulation on account of the Reform Bill, he took no public part in political affairs. In the subsequent agitation for the incorporation of Manchester, however, he was largely concerned. In 1834 he wrote a series of anonymous letters to the *Manchester Times*, then edited by Archibald Prentice, boldly exposing and denouncing the jobbery of the existing borough government, and zealously advocating municipal reform.† The agitation lasted four years, and, as it advanced, gained more and more of its strength from Richard Cobden's influence. When it was ended in 1838 by the granting of the coveted charter, and the appointment of Sir Thomas Potter as the first Mayor, Cobden was applauded as 'a gentleman who, although he has not been so long before the eyes of the community, has, by the soundness of his judgment, his admirable capacity for business, his energy, his perseverance, and his conciliatory manners, placed himself high in the estimation of his fellow-townsmen.'†

Much more memorable was the agitation for repeal of the Corn Laws, begun in Manchester long before the battle for municipal reform, but only attracting general attention after that was over. Its history is, in its essential parts, but a chapter in the life of Richard Cobden. The Anti-Corn-Law League was formally established in March, 1839. In 1835 Cobden had begun to work in the business by writing

* *Manchester City News*, April 8, 1865.

† *Manchester Times*, December 22, 1838.

another series of anonymous letters in the *Manchester Times*. "They contained no internal evidence," said the editor of the paper, "to guide me in guessing as to who might be the writer, and I concluded that there was some new man amongst us, who, if he held a station that would enable him to take a part in public affairs, would exert a widely beneficial influence amongst us."* A few months later Prentice was introduced to his unknown correspondent. "I found," he said, "a man who could enlighten by his knowledge, counsel by his prudence, and conciliate by his temper and manners, and who, if he found his way into the House of Commons, would secure its respectful attention; but I had been an actor amongst men who, from 1812 to 1832, had fought in the rough battle for Parliamentary Reform, and I missed, in the unassuming gentleman before me, not the energy, but the apparent hardihood and dash which I had believed to be requisites to the success of a popular leader."† Very soon Cobden proved that he had every necessary of leadership that was possessed by the older reformers, with vastly greater powers and materials of success.

In June and July of 1835 he was travelling in the United States and Canada, going thither only to extend his calico business, but coming home to propound views that immediately attracted the attention, and long afterwards gained the adhesion, of the foremost thinkers and workers in the country. His famous pamphlet, really a portly book, entitled *England, Ireland, and America*, 'by a Manchester Manufacturer,' was published early in 1836. In it—while there were threatenings of European war, in which England was likely to aid the Ottoman power in opposition to Russia—he eloquently propounded the doctrine of non-intervention, urging the prior claims of civilization, commerce, and domestic freedom upon the energies of English statesmen,

* Prentice, *History of the Anti-Corn-Law League*, vol. i., p. 46.
† *Ibid.*, vol i., p. 47.

and the sympathies of English taxpayers. He pointed to the prosperity of America as evidence of the soundness of his arguments. He pointed to the miseries of Ireland as evidence of the folly and wickedness of the policy that had long been dominant in the country, and that had had most fatal effect in the wretched warfare following the French Revolution. "Our efforts," he declared, "have been directed towards the assistance of States for whose welfare we are not responsible, whilst our oppression and neglect have fallen upon a people over whom we are endowed with the power and accountable privileges of government. Does not the question of Ireland, in every point of view, offer the strongest possible argument against the national policy of this country, for the time during which we have wasted our energies and squandered our wealth upon all the nations of the Continent, whilst a part of our own empire, which, more than all the rest of Europe, has needed our attention, remains to this hour an appalling monument of our neglect and misgovernment?"

The story of the Anti-Corn-Law League need not here be detailed. Its main outlines are well known, and best known of all is the wonderful vigour with which Cobden advocated its principles, and, after seven years of persistent fighting, obtained their general adoption. Very characteristic of him was the way in which he brought into the League a young man, who, in 1839, had introduced himself to him with a request that he would go down to Rochdale, and there address a meeting for the encouragement of popular education. Cobden went, and heard his friend speak—with such effect that he urged him to become a Leaguer at once. The young man was then, however, too much occupied with other and personal matters to enter on any new public business. But he was not allowed to keep out of it for long. A few months after the Rochdale meeting, it is said, 'Mr. Bright was at Leamington, where his wife had just died. Mr. Cobden came to visit him, and found him sunk in grief and

despondency. The great free-trader reminded him that there were at that moment thousands of widows and children starving for want of the bread which was kept from them by the infamous laws against which they had been for some time protesting. "Come with me," exclaimed Cobden, "and we will never rest until we abolish the Corn Laws.'"* In that way Cobden gained his dearest friend and his foremost political coadjutor.

In 1841 Cobden entered Parliament as member for Stockport. The House was opened on the 24th of August. On the following day Cobden made his first Parliamentary speech on the Corn Laws. 'When the daily papers of the 26th of August reached their destinations throughout the land,' says the historian of the period, 'there were meditative students, anxious invalids in their sick chambers, watchful philosophers, and a host of sufferers from want, who felt that a new era in the history of England had opened, now that the People's Tale had at last been told in the People's House of Parliament. Such observers as these, and multitudes more, asked of all who could tell them, who this Richard Cobden was, and what he was like; and the answer was, that he was the member of a calico-printing firm in Manchester; that it was supposed he would be an opulent man if he prosecuted business as men of business generally do; but that he gallantly sacrificed the pursuit of his own fortune, and his partners gallantly spared him to the public, for the sake of the great cause of Corn Law Repeal—his experience, his liberal education, and his remarkable powers all indicating him as the fitting leader in the enterprise. It was added that his countenance was grave, his manner simple and earnest, his eloquence plain, ready, and forcible, of a kind eminently suited to his time and his function, and wholly new in the House of Commons. It was at once remarked that he was not treated in the House with the courtesy usually accorded to a new member; and it was

* *Manchester City News*, April 8, 1865.

perceived that he did not need such observance. However agreeable it might have been to him, he did not expect it from an assemblage proud of the preponderance of the landed interest within it; and he could do without it.'*

He succeeded, though painfully and slowly, in the object which he had at heart. When the battle was over, and the Corn Laws were finally and totally repealed on the 26th of May, 1846, Sir Robert Peel, either forgetting or rejoicing at the hard words that had been heaped upon him by Cobden and others before his conversion to the doctrines of free trade, paid an honest tribute to its foremost hero. "The name," he said, "which ought to be, and will be, associated with the success of these measures, is the name of the man who, acting, I believe, from pure and disinterested motives, has, with untiring energy and by appeals to reason, enforced their necessity with an eloquence the more to be admired because it was unaffected and unadorned—the name which ought to be associated with the success of these measures is the name of Richard Cobden."†

* MARTINEAU, *History of the Thirty Years' Peace.*

† This wise and truthful sketch of Cobden's share in the Anti-Corn-Law battle, and the temper that he showed therein, is from the pen of one of his oldest Manchester friends: 'From the first speech which Mr. Cobden made on free trade in the Chamber of Commerce, in the second month of 1838—a speech which was one of the ablest he ever made, and which so arrested public attention that it was copied into almost every newspaper in the kingdom—the labours of the great leader of the movement steadily increased. Whilst all these movements were going on, however, a considerable demand upon his time was made to attend the daily meetings of the Council of the League in Newall's Buildings. It was in the council that he showed the great resources of his mind; his power to initiate and mature the schemes which were necessary to carry on the agitation with a prospect of success. At first, he was only present a few hours in the day, or sent for only occasionally from his warehouse; but as the movement went on, greater demands were made upon his time, till at length the whole of it, and his utmost energies, were given to his task. The amount of personal correspondence which his labours entailed upon him was something beyond the capacities of most men; but he usually sat down to it with a freshness of spirit, alacrity, and cheerfulness, from day to day, which never seemed to wane. During the parliamentary session he and Bright were necessarily absent for long periods, and it was only then that it became

During these years of agitation, Cobden had devoted himself almost exclusively to public work, and, in consequence,

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apparent how necessary their presence was in the council as well as in the field. It was then that little intrigues and cabals were got up, at the seat of the movement, with most hope of success, with a view to thwarting and placing in a false position those who were necessarily left in charge of the movements of the League. Men who did not very fully comprehend the entire bearings of the free trade question—men who were but half-hearted in the contest, and men who from time to time lost heart and began to think that a compromise might be made for a fixed duty upon corn—such men, counting upon their wealth or position, came down upon the council with their advice, and sought, by every means they had at command, to induce them to swerve from the path which had been chalked out with patient labour and mature thought as that which ought to be adhered to. Fortunately, the men left in charge of the helm were of sufficient nerve and steadfastness for the occasion; but they had to fight hard, and were put to much trouble, and incurred a good deal of personal odium with their friends outside, through the misrepresentation and false colouring given to their conduct on such occasions. When Mr. Cobden was there in person, such adversaries and obstructives were easily brushed aside. "The total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws" was his motto; and he was ever armed with such cogent and powerful reasons for this policy, that his arguments soon put doubt and pusillanimity to flight. On one memorable occasion, however, these intrigues were carried to such a length that Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright had to be summoned to the rescue; and a local meeting was held, at which a victory in favour of the policy of the council was only snatched by a narrow majority. But for this victory, the other great victory which consummated the labours of the League might never have been attained. In the council, while he was always firm and resolute where a principle was at stake, he was mild and conciliating in his general bearing towards all opponents. When a resolution was proposed with which he did not concur, he rarely met it by proposing another, but preferred modifying and altering its language so as often to obviate the necessity of taking a vote upon it. His tact was admirable. Perhaps he was seen to most advantage during the days which were to terminate in the great meetings at the Free-trade Hall. On such occasions gentlemen would be continually pouring into the council room from all parts of the country with letters of introduction to the man whose fame had now become almost world-wide in connection with this movement. In his usual easy, gentle, and unassuming manner, he soon engaged such visitors in conversation, and it was rare, indeed, if they had any information in them which could be made useful, either for argument or illustration, that he did not succeed in drawing it from them. I once heard one of those visitors, after one of the great meetings, express the surprise it had given him to find how much of Mr. Cobden's speech had been made up of information thus

his own business, which, after separating from his old partners, he carried on in company with his brothers, suffered considerably. It was with good reason, therefore, that some of his political and private friends, richer than himself, collected a sum of 80,000*l.*, and presented it to him as a splendid token of their admiration and gratitude, and henceforth Cobden had little personal connection with trade. With a part of his little fortune, the farm at Midhurst, in which he had passed his earliest years, was purchased, and the old farmhouse was replaced by a much handsomer, though still a modest house. This was Cobden's home for the rest of his life.

Often, however, he was travelling. In 1846, immediately after the repeal of the Corn Laws, he went on a lengthened tour on the Continent. In France he had an interview with Louis Philippe, whom he found, as he said, "very civil and communicative" on every subject save free trade. He was complimented and congratulated almost without end, however, by the leading economists and liberal statesmen of France; and like honours were paid to him in Spain. At Madrid he saw a bull-fight. "So long," he wrote in his note-book, "as this continues to be the popular sport of high and low, so long will the people be indifferent to human life and have their civil contests marked with displays of cruelty which make other nations shudder." The whole aspect of

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gleaned in his presence from strangers. He had a great respect for the Society of Friends. The sturdy character of independence they had earned in resisting church rates, and, above all, their steadfastness in the anti-slavery agitation, had won his admiration; and it was mainly owing to his influence with them that they consented to give up the services of Mr. George Thompson to the League, foreseeing, as he did, that too many agitations in the country at once might militate against the success of all. With the Chartists, of course, he could neither make nor offer terms. They were led by a man of the class to which Hunt and Sir F. Burdett at one time belonged, who made the agitation they led a stepping-stone to personal notoriety and popular adulation, and there was little or no sympathy between such men and disinterested advocates of a principle like Mr. Cobden.'—*Manchester City News*, April 15, 1865.

affairs was disheartening to him. "The Spaniards of the last two centuries," he complained, "seem literally to have done nothing but glorify themselves for the deeds of their ancestors, or loll in the shades of their olives and vines, and leave to nature the task of feeding and clothing them." During the early months of 1847 he was in Italy. At Rome, the brilliant ovation prepared in his honour afforded him "the most charming proof of the wide-spread sympathy for free-trade principles which he had seen in the course of his travels." At Turin he enjoyed the friendship of Count Cavour, "a young man," as he said, "with a sound, practical head," and helped him in his projects, then slightly formed, and not to take effect for a dozen years to come, for the establishment of constitutional government and agricultural and commercial freedom in Piedmont. Everywhere Cobden was treated with marked respect, and listened to as the rising statesman of England.* He found, on his return home in October, 1847, that, as in the case of other prophets, much less honour awaited him in his own country.

One honour fell to him. In the elections for a new Parliament that proceeded during his absence, he was chosen representative both of his old borough of Stockport, and of the West Riding of Yorkshire. He preferred to represent the county constituency, and did so for ten years. The ten years were spent in hard and honest Parliamentary work. He gave important aid to Lord John Russell's government in its application of free-trade principles to the remission of the sugar duties and the reform of the navigation laws. He entered, also, into the question of political reform, advocating extension of the suffrage, triennial Parliaments, and vote by ballot. More zealously, as war-rumours increased, and, at last, actual war was begun in the Crimea, to be followed by the unfortunate China war, he set forth his old doctrines of non-intervention. All the world knows the story of these measures, though the time has not yet come for impartial judg-

* *British Quarterly Review*, pp. 15–18.

ment on their character. 'By many whose prejudices he offended in the earnest pursuit of objects that he deemed politically just, he was called a demagogue. They saw the proofs of his popularity, and they measured his self-love by their own; they felt that the self-made man was able to wield a power which, with all the adventitious aids of birth and wealth and station, they could not gain; and they could not persuade themselves that the exercise of this power had not created an appetite which must ever yearn and crave. They felt the keen edge of his argumentative eloquence in debate; and they would not believe that the man who could thus overthrow opponents did not love the encounter and exult in victory. They knew not the man nor the spirit that animated him. There never was any one who had in him less of the love of ambition or the lust of triumph. He neither feared nor shunned the fight; and he rejoiced with child-like glee in the success of his cause. But it was the triumph of the cause, not of Cobden, that he fought for.'*

He was too modest, generous, and sympathetic to engage in any battle into which he was not driven by his sense of duty, and then it was as a duty, not as a pleasure, that he fought. 'One evening,' says one of his friends, 'as he drove to the House of Commons, to take part in a debate which it was expected would be of the sharpest, his companion, who probably looked forward to the coming struggle with somewhat of bellicose enthusiasm, rallied him gently on being what he called dull; and strove to rekindle his spirit by anticipating the weakness and wayward blundering which their adversaries were certain to betray, and by holding forth the promise of inevitable triumph. He was not, however, to be roused from his dejection. "I know you can enjoy it all," he said, "and perhaps it is best so. But I

* *British Quarterly Review*, p. 19. I make no apology for borrowing above and hereafter some sentences from the best account of Cobden's character that has anywhere been published. I believe I am right in supposing it to be from the pen of the gentleman who is preparing a detailed memoir of the great man.

hate having to bear in this way hundreds of well-meaning, wrong-headed people, and to face the look of rage and loathing with which they regard me. I had a thousand times rather not have it to do; but it must be done."*

Cobden was too anxious to do his best in correcting the errors of the well-meaning, wrong-headed people who had supremacy in most things, to be willing to hold his peace. He fearlessly gave utterance to the opinions which seemed to him most just, regardless of the contempt that was heaped upon him in Parliament and throughout the country. But he was much grieved when the general disfavour with which his opposition to the China war was regarded led to his loss of a seat, during more than two years, in the House of Commons. To one of his friends he wrote from Dunford, in 1858, that "he was learning to promote the happiness of pigs, and to give them better food than they had had before; and he had this encouragement—that *they* could not make him feel that they were ungrateful."†

He was in Parliament again in 1859, having, while he was absent in America, been chosen member for Rochdale. On his return to England he was offered a seat in the Government just then being organized by Lord Palmerston. This he refused, feeling that he could not consistently hold office under a man whose foreign and domestic policy he had always denounced as wasteful and dangerous; but he heartily co-operated with the government, and was its absolute leader, in the measure for which it will hereafter be longest remembered and best applauded — the measure, too, which, after the repeal of the Corn Laws, had and will have more effect on English commerce than any other in which Cobden was engaged. This was the realisation of Cobden's long-cherished project for a commercial treaty with France. The subject had often been discussed by the foremost advocates of free trade on both sides of the Channel; but nothing was done till 1859. In that year,

* *British Quarterly Review*, pp. 20, 21. † *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Mr. Bright, urging a reduction of armaments, publicly recommended a strengthening of intimacy between England and France by means of a treaty of commerce. That encouraged M. Michel Chevalier to write to Cobden, telling him that if the English Government favoured the scheme, he believed the support of the Emperor Louis Napoleon was certain. Cobden took counsel with Mr. Bright; they discussed the matter with Mr. Gladstone, and, obtaining his hearty concurrence, obtained also the sanction of Lord Palmerston to the commencement of negotiations by Cobden. Cobden passed the winter of 1860 and 1861 in Paris, advocating the general principles of free-trade, and expounding his views on the special points at issue to statesmen and financiers of all ranks. Many weeks were spent in tedious battlings with prejudices; but at last, chiefly through the personal influence of the Emperor, all difficulties were overcome, and the terms of a treaty were agreed upon, to receive the ready support of Lord Palmerston's ministry and the tardy and half-hearted approval of the House of Commons.

By the Cobden Treaty it was stipulated that for ten years following the 1st of October, 1861, various prohibitions upon British goods were to be removed, and all imports were to be reduced to an *ad valorem* duty of 30 *per cent.*, to be further reduced to 25 *per cent.* at the end of three years. On the other hand, England was to abolish all duties on French manufactured goods, and to reduce the imports on French wine and brandy from 5*s.* 10*d.* and 15*s.*, respectively, to 3*s.* and 8*s.* 2*d.* a gallon. Important reductions were also to be made in the duties charged in France on English iron, coal, and coke. Already many details of this treaty have been altered, and further alterations must be looked for every year. This was what Cobden looked for and ardently desired. He obtained all the concessions to the doctrine of free trade that were then in his power, confident that every fresh trial of the doctrine would give fresh proof of its wisdom, and in time make it clear that all restrictions upon the trade

of one nation with another are objectionable, and to be removed as soon and as entirely as possible. That doctrine had been advanced before. But Cobden gave it fresh impetus, and his name must ever have honourable place in the history of free trade. He refused the offer of a baronetcy and a place in the privy council that were made to him by Lord Palmerston, anxious that his service to his country and to the whole world should seem as disinterested as it really was, and preferring to have his only reward in the approval of wise, honest, and enlightened men.

That he had, and was proud of. "With regard to Mr. Cobden," said Mr. Gladstone, speaking for the Government in which he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and uttering the thought of thousands, "I cannot help expressing our obligations to him for the labour he has, at no small personal sacrifice, bestowed upon a measure which he, not the least among the apostles of free trade, believes to be one of the most memorable triumphs free trade has ever achieved. Rare is the privilege of any man who, having fourteen years ago rendered to his country one signal and splendid service, now again, within the same brief span of life, decorated neither by rank nor title, bearing no mark to distinguish him from the people whom he loves, has been permitted to perform a great and memorable service to his sovereign and to his country."

Other good work Cobden did during the short remainder of his life. He supported Lord Palmerston's Government in its abolition of the paper duty, and of other restrictions upon free trade. On the other hand, he stoutly condemned its increase of expenditure upon fortifications, armaments, and other costly systems of material defence; maintaining, as he had done for five-and-twenty years, that the true strength of the nation lay in the temper of its people. "There is no question in this House," he said, in a memorable speech in Parliament, delivered on the 30th of June, 1862, "as to defending the country against a foreign enemy. That is not

the question here, where every man has an equal interest in the safety of the country. But we may take different views, as we are entitled to do, as to the best modes of fortifying and permanently defending the country. Some think we cannot do better than increase our armaments and fortifications, while others may think, with Sir Robert Peel, that you cannot defend every part of your coast and colonies, and that, in attempting to do so, you run a greater risk of danger to the country than you would incur by husbanding the resources which you are now expending upon armaments, so as to have them at call in time of emergency. That is my view. Our wealth, commerce, and manufactures grow out of the skilled labour of men working in metals. There is not one of those men who, in case of our being assailed by a foreign power, would not in three weeks or a fortnight be available with their hard hands and thoughtful brains for the manufacture of instruments of war. That is not an industry that requires you at every step to multiply your armed men. What has given us our Armstrongs, our Whitworths, our Fairbairns?—The industry of the country in which they are mainly occupied. It has been sometimes made a reproach against me and my friends, the free-traders, that we would leave the country defenceless. I say, if you have multiplied the means of defence—if you can build three times as many steamers in the same time as other countries—to whom do you owe that but to the men who, by contending for the true principles of commerce, have created a demand for the labour of an increased number of artisans in this country? Go to Plymouth, or to Woolwich, and look at the names of the inventors of the tools for making fire-arms and shot and shell. They bear the names of men in Birmingham, in Manchester, and in Leeds—men nearly all connected, for the last twenty years, with the extension of our commerce, which has thus contributed to the increase of the strength of the country, by calling forth its genius and skill."

Thus worthily maintaining to the last that it was by trade,

by free trade, that the country was to be strengthened in time of peace and defended in time of war, Cobden advocated all sorts of reforms tending to the best and completest development of English commerce. The last speech delivered by him in the House of Commons was in condemnation of the Government for its jealous opposition to private manufacturers, and its attempting, especially in ship-building, gun-making, and the like, to do what could be done much better, more cheaply, and with more general satisfaction, by private hands. "I know of nothing," he said, in its conclusion, "so calculated some day to produce a democratic revolution as for the proud and combative people of this country to find themselves, in this vital matter of their defence, sacrificed through the mismanagement and neglect of the class to whom they have confided the care and future destinies of the country. You have brought this upon yourselves by undertaking to be producers and manufacturers. I advise you in future to place yourselves entirely in dependence upon the private manufacturing resources of the country. If you want gunpowder, artillery, small arms, or the hulls of ships-of-war, let it be known that you depend upon the private enterprise of the country, and you will get them. At all events, you will absolve yourselves from the responsibility of undertaking to do things which you are not competent to do, and you will be entitled to say to the British people, 'Our fortunes as a government and a nation are indissolubly united, and we will rise or fall, flourish or fade together, according to the energy, enterprise, and ability of the great body of the manufacturing and industrious community.'"

Those words were spoken on the 22nd of July, 1864. Richard Cobden died, to the grief of thousands who had scoffed at him while he lived, on the 2nd of April, 1865, sixty-one years old. 'He was by nature, habit, and feeling a man of action, but not in the vulgar sense, which associates energy and ambition with incessant stir and noise. He was neither talkative nor restless, greedy of excitement or afflicted

with the feverish thirst of fame. The key to his life is to be found in the earnestness of his sympathy with his kind—with their sufferings and struggles, their hopes and fears, their wrongful humiliations and noble aspirings, with all, in short, that, whether for individuals or communities, goes to make up the wear and tear, the trials and triumphs of our nature. He was called an economist, and so he was; his reason being convinced that the greatest service he could render mankind was to keep them clear of errors in the application of their industry and skill. But it was not for the sake of the theory of rule, or with any mere intellectual pride in victorious casuistry, that he inquired, computed, argued, and, when necessary, made costly sacrifices of time and health and fortune. With him the actuating motive was, from first to last, the accomplishment of the greatest possible amount of good to others in his day and generation. He thought habitually through his feelings, and no one ever succeeded in engaging his co-operation or alliance who failed to show him that his efforts, if successful, would alleviate some misery, or vindicate some questioned right, or help to give a better dinner to the working man, or strike down the uplifted arm of violence or oppression. He had the heart of a woman, with the intellect of a man; and those who knew him best well knew what depths of tenderness for those he loved lay within him, unobserved by the many, and often dark and silent as unopened fountains.'*

Richard Cobden was a man too much of our own day, and too closely involved in party questions, for his character to be at present fairly understood and rightly valued. But this, at any rate, is clear and everywhere admitted, that the wonderful prosperity now attained by English commerce is very largely due to his persistent and enlightened advocacy of free-trade doctrines, most notably illustrated by his procurement of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, near the commencement of his career, and, near its end, by his establishment of

* *British Quarterly Review*, p. 12.

the Commercial Treaty with France, but evident in all his other public measures.

With his name ends our list of English merchants. In supplement to the little that has here been said about his personal career, however, something has to be added concerning the general condition to which our commerce has been brought in the present day, by the ever-increasing wants of civilization, by the ever-growing enterprise of the merchants and manufacturers who set themselves to gratify those wants, and yet more by the ever-advancing wisdom and influence of the politicians and economists who have sought to facilitate the operations of trade by making it a bond of peace between nations, and a means of general enlightenment.

The statistics of 1865 show how vast and varied are the ramifications of English commerce.* In that year there were brought into Great Britain and Ireland, for domestic use and for exportation, 271,134,969*l.*'s worth of goods of all sorts;† while the value of British and Irish produce and

* Most of the figures given in the ensuing pages are drawn from the Board of Trade returns for 1865. I have also been much aided by a valuable supplement to the *Economist* of March 10, 1866, sketching the commercial history of 1865.

† This summary will show the relative value of our import trade with the various foreign countries and British possessions, arranged according to the amount of the goods received from them, in 1865:—

1. British Possessions:—

India	£37,395,372
Australia	10,283,113
British North America	6,350,148
British West Indies	5,159,833
Ceylon	3,707,615
Cape of Good Hope	2,218,948
Singapore	2,169,056
British Guiana	1,707,437
Mauritius	1,246,299
Hongkong	773,068
Channel Islands	417,888
Western Africa	402,692
Bermudas	259,954
Carried forward	£72,091,423

manufactures despatched to various parts of the world,

	Brought forward	£72,091,423
	Belize	244,786
	Natal	201,293
	Gibraltar	149,729
	Malta	83,993
	St. Helena	47,500
	Caffraria	25,244
	Falkland Islands	21,081
	Ascension	18
		72,865,067
2.	France	31,645,660
3.	Egypt	21,773,250
4.	United States	21,549,281
5.	Russia	17,383,395
6.	Germany :—	
	Hanse Towns	8,837,585
	Prussia	6,126,205
	Schleswig-Holstein	1,015,230
	Mecklenburgh	345,402
	Hanover	243,024
	Oldenburg	44,222
		16,611,668
7.	Holland	12,451,466
8.	China	10,673,960
9.	Belgium	7,379,393
10.	Brazil	6,797,271
11.	Turkey	5,845,753
12.	Sweden and Norway	5,654,314
13.	Cuba and Porto Rico	5,085,025
14.	Spain	5,008,617
15.	Peru	4,002,150
16.	Chili	3,798,543
17.	Mexico	3,216,924
18.	Portugal	2,848,731
19.	Italy	2,486,963
20.	Denmark	2,284,287
21.	New Granada	1,574,892
22.	Western Africa	1,346,998
23.	Uruguay	1,256,000
24.	Philippine Islands	1,253,904
25.	Austrian Territories	1,160,886
26.	Greece	1,071,645
27.	Argentine Republic	1,014,600
	Carried forward	£268,040,643

amounted to 165,862,402*l.** To effect these transfers, 44,510 vessels, with an aggregate burthen of 12,164,253

Brought forward	£268,040,643
28. Central America	694,245
29. Japan	614,743
30. Foreign West Indies	447,903
31. Morocco	412,889
32. Venezuela	221,331
33. Bolivia	151,026
34. Northern Whale Fishery	133,872
35. Eastern Africa	121,667
36. Algeria	90,505
37. Borneo	55,438
38. French Possessions in India	43,633
39. Equador	40,715
40. Islands in the Pacific	26,830
41. Papal Ports	23,921
42. Siam	9,372
43. Tunis	5,492
44. Persia	517
45. Java	226
46. Cape Verd Islands	1
	£271,134,969

* Thus detailed :—

1. British Possessions:—

India	£18,254,570
Australia	13,352,357
British North America	4,705,079
British West Indies	1,945,466
Hong Kong	1,561,851
Cape of Good Hope	1,454,540
Singapore	1,442,450
Gibraltar	1,116,659
Channel Islands	752,048
British Guiana	740,553
Ceylon	685,308
Malta	633,887
Mauritius	596,848
Western Africa	403,383
Natal	223,420
Belize	160,445
Bermudas	62,659
St. Helena	46,103
Aden	45,595
Carried forward	£48,183,221

tons, entered the British ports during the year; and in the same period, 12,817,442 tons of goods were exported, in 48,181 vessels. Of the total quantity of articles produced or manufactured at home for home consumption, and conveyed from place to place by rail and waggon, canal and cart, it is not easy to make an estimate. It is enough, however, to give occupation to an immense machinery of traffic, and to afford employment to half. the population of the country, as merchants, manufacturers, shopmen, clerks, or labourers.

Farmers, and their subordinates even, are members of the mercantile community. The corn and cattle that they pro-

Brought forward	£48,183,221	
Kaffraria	22,196	
Falkland Islands	9,308	
Ascension	7,811	
Heligoland	326	
		48.222,862
2. United States		21,235,963
3. Germany:—		
Hanse Towns	15,091,373	
Prussia	2,102,741	
Hanover	399,933	
Schleswig-Holstein	147,313	
Mecklenburg	76,993	
Oldenburg	59,887	
		17,878,240
4. France		9,034,883
5. Holland		8,111,022
6. Turkey		7,151,559
7. Egypt		5,985,087
8. Brazil		5,668,089
9. Italy		5,376,886
10. China		3,609,301
11. Russia		2,921,496
12. Belgium		2,921,300
13. Spain		2,427,861
14. New Granada		2,372,497
15. Portugal		2,216,900
16. Cuba and Porto Rico		2,207,511
17. Argentine Republic		1,951,048
Carried forward		£149,292,505

duce and send to market are really the grand staple of our trade; and, if they are merchants on a small scale, it is the chief business of many of our wealthiest and most influential merchants, strictly so called, to eke out our insufficient native supplies of food with importations from foreign countries. Of wheat, 3,580,313 quarters were, in 1865, reported as having been grown for sale in England; and in addition thereto, 21,342,000 cwts. were brought from other parts, about two-fifths being from Russia, a third from Prussia, Denmark, and the German States, an eighth from France, and a fifteenth from the United States and British North America. In 1864,

	Brought forward	£149,292,505
18.	Mexico	1,898,056
19.	Chili	1,603,753
20.	Sweden and Norway	1,578,417
21.	Japan	1,520,895
22.	Denmark	1,263,953
23.	Peru	1,193,335
24.	Foreign West Indies	1,157,960
25.	Greece	1,020,489
26.	Philippine Islands	945,624
27.	Java	928,642
28.	Austrian Territories	877,325
29.	Uruguay	813,448
30.	Western Africa	642,467
31.	Venezuela	387,032
32.	Morocco	272,184
33.	Central America	137,655
34.	Tunis	102,117
35.	Eastern Africa	61,828
36.	Siam	36,943
37.	Islands in the Pacific	36,329
38.	Ecuador	28,675
39.	Cape Verd Islands	21,542
40.	Persia	16,237
41.	Papal Ports	12,708
42.	Algeria	10,916
43.	Bolivia	997
44.	Arabia	305
45.	Patagonia	65
		£165,862,402

on the other hand, the abundant crops of America furnished nearly half of the quantity brought from abroad, and there was a corresponding diminution in the supplies of Eastern Europe. In 1862, again, a year of scarcity to England, no less than 41,033,000 cwts. of wheat were collected from foreign countries, to supply the deficiency. So it is with barley, oats, and other grain. Whatever is required to complete the supplies necessary to meet the wants of the English market is imported from Europe or America. Always, however, the trade of London is chiefly in foreign grain. In 1865 the London Corn Exchange saw the transfer of 974,295 quarters of wheat, and 587,006 of barley, three-tenths of each being British, seven-tenths foreign; while of 2,252,653 quarters of oats disposed of in the same market, only a tenth part was grown in Great Britain and Ireland.

Considerably more than half the bread eaten in England is thus made of foreign grain. More than half our meat is of native growth; yet the quantity brought over from the Continent is very considerable. In 1865, 283,271 head of oxen, bulls, and cows, 914,170 sheep and lambs, and 132,943 pigs were brought into the United Kingdom; making a total of 1,330,384 beasts, against 813,338 imported in 1864, and 608,823 in 1863; so that, if eastern Europe has sent us the cattle-plague, it has also sent us cattle enough to replace, over and over again, those that we have lost by disease. No one knows how many beasts are slaughtered and disposed of in country districts. It appears, however, that in 1865 there were 346,975 cows and oxen, 1,514,926 sheep and lambs, and 32,179 pigs brought to London for sale at Smithfield market.

There is hardly a single kind of food, from hams to caviare, and from potatoes to truffles, that we do not get from abroad. All the farmyards of Europe help to meet the necessities of the population of England, too numerous to be fed exclusively with native produce. For many articles of diet that are now almost necessaries of life, we are altogether de-

pendent upon foreign countries. So it is, especially, with sugar, tea, and coffee. Of sugar, 509,357 tons were received in England in 1865, nearly half coming from the British West Indies and British Guiana, about a fourth from Cuba and Porto Rico, a little from Brazil, and most of the remainder from the Mauritius, India, Java, and the Philippine Islands. For the same period, the imports of tea amounted to 43,448 tons, about one twenty-fourth being East Indian and Japanese, the rest Chinese. Of coffee, more than thrice as much being entered in British ports and reshipped for foreign sale, 13,722 tons were imported for home consumption; two-thirds being the produce of Ceylon, a fourth coming from Jamaica and other British possessions, and most of the rest from Central America. Real Mocha coffee is a thing now rarely sold. In the year 1865, every inhabitant of the United Kingdom, including children, consumed, upon an average, a pound of coffee, three pounds and a quarter of tea, and forty-one pounds of sugar. Of rice each person used rather more than three pounds and a half, and of tobacco, which is a sort of food to many, rather more than a pound and a third.

Thus drawing much of its solid food from other regions, England still makes beer both for itself and for a good many other parts of the world.* Besides the vast quantities consumed at home, 516,366 barrels, valued at 2,060,369*l.*, were, in 1865, sent to foreign countries and the colonies. On the other hand, 23,100 puncheons of brandy, 33,500 puncheons of rum, and 114,250 pipes of wine were received from abroad for English use. All the rum came from the West Indies; most of the brandy from France. Of the wine,

* At Burton-upon-Trent, Allsopp's Brewery alone covers thirty acres of ground, gives employment to nearly a thousand workmen, and produces, on an average, nearly 50,000 gallons of ale each day in the year. The Emperor of the French, it is said, after a visit to Allsopp's works, engaged some experienced men to introduce the method of brewing there adopted into France. But he could not take home the Trent, and without Trent water it is impossible to produce Burton ale.

nearly half was Spanish, about a quarter Portuguese, and a fifth French, the remainder being chiefly Italian and Rhenish, with a very scanty supply from the Cape. It is satisfactory to learn that Cape wine is being banished from the market. In 1859 more than 8,500 pipes were imported; in 1865 there were hardly 450 pipes, and of these not half were sold. The much-abused Cobden Treaty is steadily taking effect in encouraging a healthy preference for the light wines of France, Italy, Greece, and Hungary, not only over the so-called port and sherry of the Cape, but over the inferior and doctored products of Spanish and Portuguese vintage.

Nor is there any real ground for dread as to the working of the Cobden Treaty in another way. Alarmists have threatened us with a speedy emptying of our coal-mines; and we have been told that, while it is the duty of every English householder to be as careful of his fuel as he can, our governors have acted very wickedly in sanctioning the sale of it to foreigners. It is true that the continental states are every year obtaining larger stores of coal from England; and in 1865 the exportation amounted to 9,189,021 tons, reported to be worth 4,431,492*l.*; but we can spare them that and more. The best statisticians tell us that, assuming our inability to work the mines at a greater depth than 4,000 feet, the known coal-fields will be able to meet all probable demands for the next five hundred years. Before the five hundred years are over, we may be certain either that new supplies will be discovered, or that new modes of working, enabling us to get lower down than now is possible, will be found out, or that advancing science will detect some altogether new ways of producing light and heat. That contingency is the likeliest of all. Surely, before long, coal will be as antiquated as wood for fuel, and for striking a light the match will be as old-fashioned as the flint.

At present, however, coal is monarch absolute. We cannot cook our food or warm our houses without it. Without it those wonderful manufacturing establishments that are

the chief causes of our commercial greatness in modern times could not possibly be carried on.

In England and Wales there are seventeen coal-fields. By far the largest of them is that of South Wales. Out of the fuel which it contains might be shaped a mountain three times as high as Snowdon, and with a base of a thousand square miles. Its greatest thickness is 10,000 feet, exceeding any other in the world, except the great coal-field of Nova Scotia. Its present yield is 9,000,000 tons a year, and the same annual produce may be drawn from it for two millenniums to come. Next to it in size is the Derbyshire and Yorkshire coal-field, which yields more than 12,000,000 tons a year, and can go on doing so for seven centuries without being exhausted. In it there are 541 collieries, spread over a surface of 760 square miles. The great Durham and Northumberland basin, which furnishes Newcastle coal, covers an area of 460 miles, and contains 268 collieries, whence are dug about 16,000,000 tons of coal each year. The Lancashire district, with half the area, yields about half as much coal, though giving work to 390 collieries. The other English deposits are all much smaller, and, taken altogether, do not furnish as much coal as the Durham and Northumberland district. Some of them, like the famous Coalbrook Dale field, in Shropshire, are already nearly exhausted. In Scotland there is one vast deposit touching the southern slope of the Grampian Hills, with an area of about 1720 square miles, at present yielding less than 10,000,000 tons a year. Altogether, Great Britain now produces nearly 70,000,000 tons each year, less than half that quantity being drawn from all other parts of the world.* Even if there be excuse for fearing that we are using up our fuel too fast, it is evident that we are using it to wonderful advantage. 'We are living,' as Robert Stephenson once said, 'in an age when the pent-up rays of that sun which shone upon the great carboniferous forests of past ages are

* Hull. *The Coal-fields of Great Britain.*

being liberated to set in motion our mills and factories, to carry us with great rapidity over the earth's surface, and to propel our fleets, regardless of wind and tide, with unerring regularity over the ocean.'

The chief commercial advantage resulting from the increase in the coal trade has been its advancement of iron mining and iron manufacture. In 1741, before charcoal and coke furnaces were introduced, only 17,350 tons of iron were produced in the whole of Great Britain. In 1848, the quantity was eighty times as great. In 1857 it had risen to 3,659,447 tons. In 1865 it was certainly not less than 4,200,000 tons. Of Scotch pig-iron, about 1,164,000 tons were produced, chiefly in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. Quite as much came from Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire, and about 40,000 tons from Flint and Denbighshire. Of the English iron-fields, the Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire district yielded about 750,000 tons, the Derbyshire, Lancashire, and Cumberland about a third as much. From Staffordshire and Worcestershire were drawn some 900,000 tons, and from Shropshire and its neighbourhood about a quarter as much. The market worth of this pig-iron was not less than 12,000,000*l.*, and it was reduced from about 12,000,000 tons of iron-ore by means of nearly 700 blast furnaces.

In most of these furnaces the same rule is observed. 'The crude iron is melted in a hollow fire, and partially decarburized by the action of a blast of air forced over its surface by a fan or blowing engine. The carbon, having a greater affinity for the oxygen than for the iron, combines with it, and passes off as carbonic acid.' This constitutes what is called the refining process. Partly purifying the iron, it adds to it other impurities drawn from the fuel, and these and others have to be removed by puddling. Here the iron is separated from the fire by a bridge or partition, and lodged in a reverberating furnace formed of iron plates fastened by iron tie-bars and lined with fire-brick. A current

of hot air induces the flame to play upon the iron. 'In the furnace the iron is kept in a state of fusion, whilst the workman, called the puddler, by means of a rake or rabble, agitates the metal so as to expose, as far as he is able, the whole of the charge to the action of the oxygen passing over it from the fire. By this means the carbon is oxidised, and the metal is gradually reduced to a tough, pasty condition, and subsequently to a granular form, somewhat resembling heaps of boiled rice with the grains greatly enlarged. In this condition of the furnace the cinder or earthy impurities yield to the intense heat and flow off from the mass over the bottom in a highly fluid state. At intervals in the process, portions of oxides of iron, hammer-scales, scoriæ, and, in some cases, limestone and common salt, are thrown upon the molten iron, and form a fluid slag, which assists in oxidising the carbon and removing the magnesia, sulphur, and other impurities of the iron. The iron at this stage is comparatively pure, and quickly becomes capable of agglutination. The puddler then collects the metallic granules or particles with his rabble, and rolls them together, backwards and forwards, over the hearth, into balls of convenient dimensions, about the size of thirteen-inch shells, when he removes them from the furnace to be subjected to the action of the hammer or mechanical pressure necessary to give to the iron homogeneity and fibre. It is thus reduced to the form of a flat bar, and is then cut into convenient lengths by the shears. These pieces are again piled or faggotted together into convenient heaps and re-heated in the furnace. As soon as a faggot thus prepared has been heated to the welding temperature, it is passed through the roughing-rolls to reduce it to the form of a bar, and then through the finishing-rolls, where the required form and size are given to it, either round or square bars, plates, or the like.'*

Most of the iron used in England is of English extraction,

* Fairbairn, *Iron, its History, Properties, and Processes of Manufacture* (Edinburgh, 1865), pp. 104, 105, 107, 131.

although in 1865 there were 51,464 tons imported from foreign countries, the chief being Sweden. Most of the copper is of foreign production, the imports of 1865 being 556,588 tons, of which half was Chilian. It is principally with iron, copper, and the mixture of copper and zinc in brass that the great tool manufactories of the country are carried on, wonderful sources of profit in themselves, and yet greater sources of profit as agents in the manufacture of cotton, wool, and other staples of our national wealth.

Of all the monster establishments for the manufacture of iron, now in Great Britain, perhaps the most notable is that founded at Manchester by Mr. William Fairbairn in 1817.* Mr. Fairbairn set in motion all the wonderful improvements, in cotton, woollen, flax, and silk spinning and weaving mechanism which later engineers have brought to perfection. Succeeding, and helping thousands of others to succeed mightily, in these ways, he afterwards turned his energies to other branches of engineering enterprise. The Canal Street Works carried on by his successors now comprise a vast foundry and forge; a great boiler-yard, with machinery for rivet making, shearing and punching; a bridge-yard in which iron bridges of all sorts and sizes are manufactured in bits and sent to all parts of the world ready for putting together; a millwrights' factory containing blacksmiths' forges, with turning, planing, and fitting shops of various kinds; and a huge engine yard with every appliance for making and fitting up all descriptions of steam-engines.

Yet larger is the establishment of Messrs. Platt Brothers and Company, at Oldham, known as the Hartford Works. In it more than 5,000 men and boys are constantly employed, to whom at least 250,000*l.* are paid each year in wages alone. Its various forges, foundries, workshops, and yards cover twenty acres of ground, and consume each week about 500

* An interesting sketch of his personal history appears in Mr. SMILES's *Industrial Biography*. Therefore no more than seemed absolutely necessary is said about him here.

tons of coal and 150 tons of coke, which, by help of fifteen steam-engines, with an aggregate power exceeding that of 2,500 horses, convert some 450 tons of iron every week into machinery of various sorts. The iron reaches the works in the crude state to which it is reduced by the blast furnaces. It is puddled and brought into a malleable condition before being conveyed to the smiths' shop, there to be submitted to an iron-cutting saw capable of revolving a thousand times in a minute, and passing in each revolution through a trough of cold water to prevent it from becoming too hot by friction with the metal. The iron bars thus cut into the proper lengths are next pressed between revolving rollers, which give them a perfectly smooth and uniform surface. Then they are conveyed to the turning and fitting shops, 'which,' we are told, 'for extent and completeness stand unrivalled in the world. On the floors of the buildings set apart for these processes, hundreds of turning lathes and of planing, shaping, slotting, boring, and screw-cutting machines are to be seen at work. In one room we see a planing machine with a bed large enough to hold one half of the framework of a large power-loom, the cutting tools of which are so adjusted that all the portions of the frame which require planing are acted upon at one time; while in another we find a shaping machine, manufactured at great cost, devoted to the production of a tiny bracket. One turning lathe will be found reducing the face of a huge cylinder—the chisel, as the cylinder turns slowly round, paring the hard metal with as much apparent ease as though it were chalk; while at another, an active lad is turning off small iron screws by the gross.' The different parts of the various machines that are to be produced are forged and shaped in different rooms. They are finally taken into the fitting-up rooms, there to be put together and prepared for distribution to the wholesale dealers and shipping agents. All sorts of machinery are made in this vast establishment, but its chief business is in the construction of appliances for cotton and woollen manufacture. It is calculated

that in it could be produced each week the entire fittings and furnishings for a mill of 20,000 spindles for preparing and spinning either cotton or wool, as well as for a weaving shed of 200 looms in which the yarn thus manufactured is to be made into cloth.*

Enumeration, in the order of their use, of the chief of these machines will enable us to understand the general process of cotton manufacture. The first machine produced at the Hartford Works is for use, not in England, but in the cotton-growing countries. The Messrs. Platt are famous for their double-acting Macarthy gins, by which eight pounds of clean cotton may be separated from the pods and seeds in an hour by an ordinary workman, and an adaptation of the Macarthy principle to steam power, which can do the work four or five times as quickly. The cotton thus cleaned being brought to England and sent to the cotton mill, is first submitted to a machine called the opener, by which the fibre is opened up, and any dirt, sand, dry leaves, or other impurities mixed up with it are removed. Special need for this machine has arisen by the forced substitution, during the last few years, of Indian and other cotton for the cleaner produce of America. Surat cotton, that till lately was almost worthless, and that is still unavailable for old-fashioned machinery, can now be purified and smoothed out so as to uncoil without injury to the fleece. Then it is passed on to the carding machine. By this the fibre is combed and freed from finer impurities. One carding engine is sufficient for the coarser yarns; those intended for more delicate use are submitted to two, a breaker and a finisher. 'The cotton which enters the carding engine in a fleece leaves it in the shape of a narrow riband called a sliver, which is then passed in succession through various machines, known as the drawing, slubbing, intermediate, and roving frames. The object of these machines is the same throughout, the drawing, straightening, and elongating of the cotton fibres, until, when it leaves the roving frame, the sliver as-

* *Manchester City News*, April 1 and 8, 1865.

sumes the shape of a softly-twisted cord, which is now ready for the throstle-frame or the spinning-mule, by which it is further extenuated and twisted into yarn. The throstle or water-frame is chiefly used for spinning twist for warps or coarse numbers, while the finer qualities of twist and the bulk of the weft are spun upon the mule.' When, a hundred years ago, Hargreaves invented his spinning-jenny, every thread of cotton was spun separately and by hand. Now, many of Platt's mules contain twelve hundred spindles, each one able to do the work of several dozen men, and adapted to produce every sort of thread, from the stout twist used in the manufacture of rough cotton sheetings to the slender threads which go to the making of the most transparent muslins.*

When the cotton is made into calico or muslin, it is subjected to further mechanical operations in bleaching, printing, and dyeing, and then it passes into the hands of the wholesale dealer or warehouseman. Often all these businesses are conducted by the same masters, the millowner having at once spinning, weaving, and printing works in one or other of the great cotton districts, and monster warehouses in such great centres of the trade as Manchester or Glasgow. Messrs. Rylands and Sons, of Wigan, whose Manchester warehouse has been already referred to, do all this, and apply themselves to half a dozen other businesses as well. About forty years ago, when he was thirteen, Mr. John Rylands spent the pocket-money allowed to him by his father, who made a living for himself as a draper, in buying a little warp and weft, which his old nurse helped him to turn into calico. That he sold, and so was able to buy other material, and thence step by step to build up an extensive trade for himself. The trade has grown wonderfully, all the more through the energy which has enabled him to keep all its ramifications in his own hands and under his own directions. He now obtains coal from collieries of his own, procures flax from fields in Ireland of which he is the proprietor, and is himself the im-

* *Manchester City News*, April 15, 1865.

porter of the cotton wool that he uses, besides taking personal supervision of the spinning, weaving, bleaching, and printing works at Ainsworth, Gorton, and Wigan, in which more than 4,500 workmen are employed. At their works near Wigan, pleasantly lodged in the valley of the Douglas, a mill, almost unrivalled in manufacturing architecture, which was set up in 1865, is conveniently adjacent to their extensive collieries.*

* 'This magnificent mill is three storeys high, and the whole of it is fireproof. The top room of the north end is for receiving cotton, which will be brought by a line from the railway over a viaduct of 292 feet in length, crossing a reservoir, whose area is 7,306 square yards, and 6½ yards deep, the walls of which contain 59,400 cubic feet of stone, and it will hold above eight million gallons of water for condensing purposes. The second floor will contain the machinery for cleaning, opening, and making laps for the card-room. The bottom room is for boilers, mechanics' shop, &c. The second or middle division contains four horizontal steam engines, of 200-horse power, and the chief gearing for driving the mill. In this room the engine beds alone contain about 42,000 cubic feet of stone and brick. The south end has three storeys, each 273 feet by 108 feet; the bottom and top rooms are for throstles and mules, and will contain 60,000 spindles, producing about 70,000 lbs. weight of yarn weekly, ranging from No. 14's to 40's. The middle room is for carding and preparing for these spindles. All the bottom rooms are 17 feet, the middle 14 feet 6 inches, and the top 13 feet 4 inches in height. The weaving shed will be 540 feet long, 196 feet wide, and 20 feet high, and is calculated to hold 2,940 looms, which will be driven by two horizontal engines of 100-horse power. The roof will be supported by 408 pillars, and the looms will be turned by 900 pulleys. The warehouse is 240 feet by 168 feet, one storey high. It extends over part of the lodge, supported by 74 stone pillars, three feet square and 24 feet high, and it will contain 16,000 cubic feet of stone, and 37,000 superficial feet of glass for lights. In the construction of the mill and weaving shed, the following materials have been or will be required, viz.:—93,206 cubic feet of stone, 94,588 cubic feet of timber, 5,136,410 common bricks, 106,115 Staffordshire blue bricks, 70,836 Staffordshire white bricks, and 47,528 fire bricks. The thickness of the mill walls is 2 feet 10 inches. This mill and weaving shed will give employment to at least 1,500 hands, at about 700*l.* weekly wages, and will cost over 100,000*l.* The mill will be supplied with coal and cannel from Messrs. Rylands' own pits, which are about 250 yards from the boilers, &c. It is distant about three quarters of a mile from Wigan Town Hall and the railway station, and the firm have a private junction railway of their own, from the millyard to the canal and North Union Railway. Taken as a whole, the Gidlow Works, Wigan, are certainly not surpassed, and, we believe, are not equalled by any other mill in the world.'—*Manchester City News*, April 15, 1866.

The statistics of the cotton trade afford wonderful illustration of the extent and elasticity of English manufacturing and commercial energy. In 1860, the last year of prosperity previous to the famine caused by the American war, 'the number of spindles employed,' says Mr. Bazley, 'was about 32,000,000, and the number of looms employed would be about 340,000. The productions in the machine-making trade had doubled within ten years. Bleach works, print works, and dye works had been largely extended during the same period. The fixed investments, including the value of land and the rights to water, amounted to not less than 60,000,000*l.* sterling, to which must be added a working capital of 20,000,000*l.* Add to these again the value of merchants' and tradesmen's stocks at home and abroad, the value of raw cotton and subsidiary materials, and of bankers' capital, and the grand total of capital employed in the trade will not be less than 200,000,000*l.* sterling.'* In 1860, 1,079,321,000 pounds of cotton were used in the United Kingdom, 85 per cent. of the whole being American, 8 per cent. Egyptian or Brazilian, and 7 per cent. East or West Indian. In 1862 and 1863 less than half that quantity was consumed, and in 1864 a little more than half. In 1865, when the greatest difficulties of the famine were overpast, the consumption had risen to 718,651,000 pounds, but of that the American proportion was only 17 per cent., whereas the supply from Egypt, Turkey, and Brazil had risen to 27 per cent., and that from the East and West Indies to 56 per cent. Not only had the machinery to be adapted to the working up of the inferior qualities introduced in these large proportions, but—a much more notable achievement—these inferior qualities had to be sought out in the new districts from which they came, and fresh kinds of commodities had to be sent off in exchange for them, in lieu of the commodities required in the American market. The mean of exchange has not yet been reached. In 1860 our

* Watts, *The Facts of the Cotton Famine* (Manchester, 1866), p. 59.

imports from India, China, Brazil, and Egypt amounted to 37,000,000*l.*; our exports thither to 30,300,000*l.* In 1865 the imports had risen to 94,600,000*l.*, the exports to only 38,300,000*l.* Our export trade with these countries has still to be more than doubled, and in doing so it will certainly confer vast benefit upon several departments of commerce. This will be some compensation for the miseries caused to the Lancashire and Lanarkshire operatives by the cotton famine.

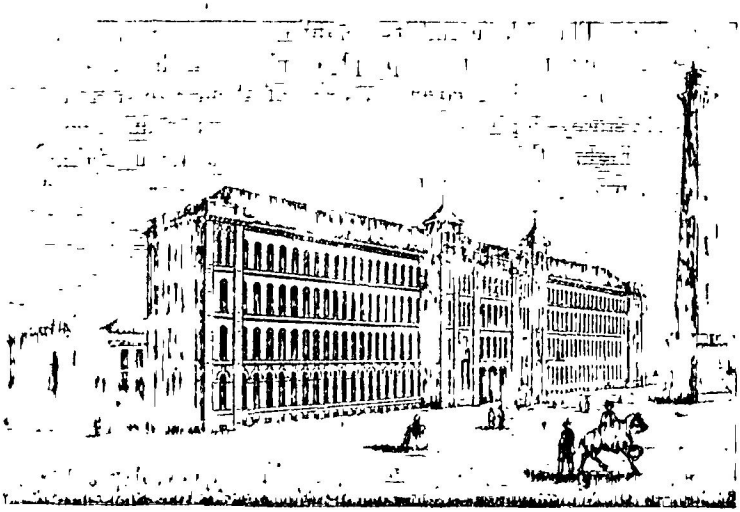
The recent derangement of the cotton trade has also been helpful to many branches of domestic manufacture, especially to the woollen and linen trades. The increased price of cotton gave encouragement to the flax growers of the north of Ireland to extend their cultivation, and the increased price of cotton goods led to a larger sale of linen articles. In like manner foreign countries, and yet more the Australian colonies, were induced to send us additional supplies of wool, which were promptly manufactured and speedily disposed of. In 1865 there were in Ireland 251,552 acres of land devoted to flax cultivation, the entire yield of the year being between 40,000 and 45,000 tons; and in the same year the arrivals from foreign countries amounted to 95,656 tons, of which three-fourths were Russian. The stock of linen yarn thus made available for the mills of northern Ireland, Yorkshire, and Scotland, and the price at which it could be bought, were each about 20 per cent. more than in 1860. There has been a nearly similar advance in the woollen trade, the raw wool imported in 1865 being 93,434 tons, half from Australia, a sixth from various parts of Europe, and the remainder from India, South Africa, and other places.

There is no great difference between the manufacture of cotton and either linen or woollen goods. Many cotton mills, indeed, were utilized, during the famine years, by application to the sister trades. The greatest linen factory in the world is that established at Dundee, by William

Baxter, and his son Edward, in 1822. In that year they erected a spinning-mill, of 15-horse power, in the Lower Dens, and in 1825 or 1826 added to it another of 30-horse power. Afterwards these engines were replaced by a larger one of 90-horse power, working 3,028 spindles for dry-spun flax and tow. In 1833 the firm, before that changed to Baxter Brothers and Company, began the construction of their larger works in the Upper Dens. These works contained a power-loom factory, the first erected in Dundee, with a weaving shop 150 feet long and 75 wide, as well as two engines of 70- and 35-horse power, commanding 2,136 spindles for dry tow and 5,872 for wet spinning. By 1864 the establishment had been further extended, so as to contain sixteen steam-engines, with, in all, 615-horse power, working 20,000 spindles and 1,200 power-looms, and giving employment to about four thousand men, women, and children. The Messrs. Baxter now consume more flax and tow than any other linen manufacturers, using it chiefly for the coarser kinds of work. 'The goods made by them consist of sail-cloth, sheetings, dowlas, ducks, and the like, for the excellent qualities of which they have an established reputation. In addition to the yarn spun in their works, they purchase largely from other spinners; and the whole goods produced by them are calendered and made up within the works, and sent out in bales, or as may otherwise be required by their customers, the value being about 1,000,000*l.* a year. There are several distinct spinning-mills in the Dens works, but the largest one is a noble structure of about 250 feet in length and four lofty storeys in height, besides alleys. The ground upon which the works are erected extends to upwards of ten acres, and it is nearly all covered with the mills, factories, warehouses, and other necessary premises required for carrying on so extensive an establishment.'*

* Warden, *The Linen Trade, Ancient and Modern* (Dundee, 1864), pp. 615, 621–623.

Other large factories join to make Dundee the centre of the linen trade in Scotland, though there less business is done than in the English district round about Leeds. Leeds, also, has an important share in the woollen manufacture, though Bradford in this has the supremacy. All over Yorkshire are woollen and worsted manufactories, the most notable in every way being the leviathan set of mills near Bradford, built in 1854 by Mr. Titus Salt, and known as the Saltaire Mills. Mr. Salt began life as a small farmer near



SALTAIRE MILLS, NEAR BRADFORD.

Leeds, his father being a woolstapler of that town. In 1834 he started business on his own account as a spinner. Just then alpaca wool — though first brought into England in 1811—began to attract notice for its superiority over all other wools in length, lustre, and softness, those advantages being, in the judgment of many, quite counteracted by increased difficulties in carding and weaving occasioned by the length and thinness of the fibre.* Mr. Salt set himself to

* *Leeds Times*, September 24, 1853.

overcome these difficulties, and turn the advantages to the best use. In 1836, when he made his first purchases, about 560,000 pounds of alpaca wool were sold in England at an average price of tenpence a pound. In 1855 there was a market for 2,793,498 pounds, valued at about half a crown a pound. This increase is chiefly due to the energy with which Mr. Salt has applied himself to the manufacture of alpaca goods. From the first he has been at the head of the trade, and twelve years ago his already vast business led him to construct the huge establishment and attendant village of Saltaire. The village and its neighbourhood afford lodging for nearly five thousand workpeople employed in the building itself. This building covers an area of about twelve acres. It is six storeys high, 550 feet long, 50 feet wide, and about 72 feet high. The machinery, worked by two steam-engines with an aggregate force of 1,250 horse-power, comprises 1,200 power-looms able to produce 30,000 yards of alpaca cloth in a day, or more than 5,000 miles in a year.*

* *The Builder*, August 19, 1854. 'Alpaca wool comes into the hands of Mr. Salt packed in what are called ballots, or small bales—so packed as to be easily piled on the backs of the animals used as beasts of burden in South America, and by which they are conveyed to the shipping ports. In this shape they reach the importer. The base consists of fleeces, which are afterwards sorted into from six to ten different qualities, adapted for the manufacture of a variety of goods, all coming under the category of the alpaca trade in stuffs. These different kinds of alpaca wool are then given to the hand-comber—a very small proportion of the whole being combed by machine. The alpaca wool is generally combed by hand, and by the improved combs recently adapted by Mr Salt, which improve the gloss of the raw material, by having a larger number of rows of brooches in the comb to what are ordinarily used by the comber of English wools. Previous to this operation it is washed by the aid of rollers made for the purpose, and moved by steam-power. One stone of 16 lbs. of sorted alpaca will yield from eleven to twelve pounds of top, or material adapted for spinning, leaving about three pounds for soil—the waste ordinarily not exceeding much more than one pound and a half in the mere combing process. The top, as it is called, is then sent to the preparing-room, where it is first put through the "slivering," or "slivery-box," perfected by an improved "gill," specially made for this class of material. The ordinary colours then go regularly through the different processes of preparing, roving, and spinning. The beautiful variety of shades and colours is

In woollen, linen, and cotton manufactures, England stands unrivalled. Other kindred manufactures, in which other countries largely participate, the chief of all being silk, add vastly to our national wealth. Besides all the quantity used at home, 1,409,221*l.* worth of silken goods were exported in 1865. In the same year the exports of worsted and woollen manufactures amounted to 20,102,259*l.*; of linen manufactures to 9,155,358*l.*; and of cotton manufactures to 46,903,796*l.*

All this prosperity is mainly owing to the energy shown by the iron-trade workers in improving the machinery required for textile fabrics. The extension of iron manufacture has also been of wonderful advantage to all the other branches of English trade. The grandest and the most universally helpful product of this enterprise appears in the development of such engineering appliances, as railways and steam-engines, steam-boats, bridges, and other aids to transit by sea and land, for which the names of Stephenson and Brunel, Napier, Peto, and a host of other men are famous all the world over. Another important branch of the iron-trade has to do with agricultural implements of all sorts, and others are engaged in the manufacture of miscellaneous tools, from ponderous steam-hammers to small

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obtained by an admixture of the sliverings, which are run up together through the second and eight following processes of preparing, roving, and spinning, according to certain approved principles of combination—showing a thorough amalgamation of the inherent colours of the raw material, and so combining them that the goods when manufactured present a delicacy and blending of shades or tints perfectly unapproachable by any other worsted fabric. It will almost appear fabulous—but such is the fact—that in the processes described above, the sliverings, drawings, and slubbings are mixed or doubled no fewer than 20,971,520 times in converting the top (or the comber's produce) into the finished hank or yarn. The yarn then passes to the weaving-room, where it is woven into fabrics of various degrees of fineness and even durability, according to the precise value or capabilities of the yarn. The average work of an alpaca weaver will be about three pieces per week, each piece consisting of thirty-six yards; in the inferior sorts four, or even more, pieces may be woven by a good hand at the loom."—*Leeds Times*, September 24, 1854.

iron nails. Vast establishments devoted to these purposes are in London, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, and nearly every other town that is conveniently related to the great fields of coal and iron ore. In 1865, besides the much greater quantities required for use at home, 1,952,658*l.* worth of steam-engines were sent to foreign parts, as well as other kinds of machinery, valued at 3,260,872*l.*, and railroad iron assessed at 3,541,296*l.* In that year, the total exports of iron and iron manufactures, including unwrought steel, were valued at 13,451,445*l.* Articles made of steel alone, or of steel mixed with iron, including all sorts of cutlery and industrial instruments, were sent abroad in the same year to the value of 956,801*l.*, the quantities prepared for use at home being many times greater than that.

For these and other kinds of hardware, Birmingham and Sheffield are the chief places of manufacture. In the neighbourhood of Birmingham 740,000 tons of pig-iron are annually produced by fifty-eight separate firms, and about 300,000 tons more are brought from other parts. Employment is thus given to some seventeen thousand labourers, who receive 1,068,000*l.* a year in wages for work in connection with 2,100 puddling furnaces, and the 855,000 tons of finished iron resulting therefrom are nearly a third of the produce of the whole kingdom.* A good part of this is finally worked up in the district. 'For chains, cables, and anchors alone,' we are told, 'upwards of 60,000 tons of best iron ore are annually consumed, and between two and three thousand persons are engaged in this manufacture alone. Many thousands are also engaged in nail-making for the supply of nearly all the markets of the world. Anvils, bolts, and nuts, bedsteads, bridle-bits, stirrups, and general saddlers' ironmongery, rolls and heavy machinery, edge tools, fenders and

* *The Resources, Products, and Industrial History of Birmingham and the Midland Hardware District*, edited by Mr. Samuel Timmins (London, 1866), pp. 66–71.

fire-irons, files, fire-proof safes, gas and other tubes, gun-barrels, hammers, railway appliances, hinges, hollow ware, bridges, roofs, tin-plates, keys, locks, latches, rivets, screws, boilers and gasometers, wheels and axles, trays, vices, and iron wire, form extensive industries in the district, employing thousands of people and using up large quantities of iron.* One of the latest developments of the iron-trade is in the making of bedsteads, almost monopolized by Birmingham. From five to six thousand are turned out every week by establishments giving employment to about a thousand men, a thousand boys, and four or five hundred women and girls.†

Steel manufacture, having been long ago appropriated by Sheffield, is carried on to only a very slight extent in Birmingham, but the manufactured article is largely used in the construction of swords, fire-irons, and all sorts of miscellaneous goods; most notably of all in the pen trade. 'Forty years ago, when Joseph Gillott and James Perry were young men, steel pens were sold for a shilling apiece. Gradually the price sank to twenty shillings a gross, and then to five shillings, and even to three-and-sixpence; and about twenty years ago the trade began to increase enormously. In 1849 there were twelve factories in Birmingham, giving employment to three hundred men and boys, and fifteen hundred and fifty women and girls, and making in all 65,000 gross a week out of six-and-a-half tons of steel. In 1865 the number of factories was still only twelve, but in them work was found for three hundred and sixty men and boys, and two thousand and fifty women and girls, who every week converted about ten tons of steel into 98,000 gross of pens. The trade price of ordinary pens now varies from three-halfpence to a shilling a gross; and barrel pens fetch from sevenpence to twelve shillings. 'When it is remembered that each gross requires 144 pieces of steel to go through at least twelve processes, the fact that 144 pens can be sold for 1½*d.* is a singular

* *Resources, &c., of Birmingham.* p. 73. † *Ibid.*, p. 626.

example of the results attainable by the division of labour and mechanical skill.'*

Birmingham is almost as famous for its pins as for its pens. A generation ago pin-making was the favourite illustration of the advantages of division of labour, every pin, in the process of its manufacture, having to pass through the hands of at least fourteen persons. Latterly, however, a complete revolution has been effected. By a machine invented in 1824 by an American named Wright, but only brought to perfection after many years' experimenting in Birmingham, the whole thing is done by the single turn of a wheel. 'The principal shaft gives motion, in its rotation, to several sliders, levers, and wheels, which work the different parts of the mechanism. A slider pushes forward pincers, which draw wire from a reel at every rotation of the shaft, and advances such a length of wire as will produce one pin. A die cuts off this length of wire by the descent of its upper chap, and this chap then opens a carrier which takes on the wire to the pointing apparatus. Here it is received by a holder, which turns round, while a bevel-edged file-wheel, rapidly revolving, gives to the wire its first rough point. It proceeds immediately by a second carrier to a second and finer file-wheel, by which the pointing is finished. A third carrier transfers the pin to the first heading-die, and, by the advance of a steel punch, one end of the pin-wire is forced into a recess, whereby the head is partially produced. A fourth carrier removes the pin to a second die, where the heading is completed. When the heading-bar retires, a forked lever draws the pin from the die, and drops it into a receptacle below. The pins now have only to be whitened. For this process they are boiled, in a copper vessel, in water along with grains of metallic tin and a certain amount of bi-tartarate of potash. When the boiling has continued about an hour, the pins are removed, thoroughly washed, dried, and polished in bran.'†

* *Resources, &c., of Birmingham*, pp. 633–637.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 601–604.

In one Birmingham house alone, that of Messrs. Edelsten and Williams, three tons of brass are used each week in making pins; and the Birmingham manufacturers employ brass in a thousand other ways. Not only is the metal here put to all sorts of uses, but for the last four or five generations the town has been the chief place of manufacture for the metal itself. Of copper 19,000 tons, valued at 1,634,000*l.*, and of zinc 11,000 tons, worth 237,600*l.*, were thus worked up in 1865. In 1800 there were fifty manufacturers of brass and brass-wares in Birmingham. In 1830 the number had risen to a hundred and sixty; in 1865 to two hundred and sixteen. And the establishments thus increased in numbers have grown yet more in size. Formerly the works were small, and the workshops low-roofed and imperfectly lighted. They were in fact dwelling-houses converted into workshops, and were chiefly situated down courts, the manufacturer residing in the house in front. The manufacturer was not unfrequently his own rough warehouseman, and some twenty, thirty, or forty workmen included his whole productive power. They treddled the turning-lathe, and he, not unfrequently, begirt with apron, examined the work, tied it up, made out the invoice, and sent off the finished work to its destination. Within the last twenty years manufactories have been specially built with reference to the requirements of the manufacture. The workshops, frequently large and roomy, often well ventilated, form, in many instances, three sides of a square, with offices and warehouses in front. Shafting, worked by steam power, is led into the shops, to drive the lathes. The casting-shops are separate buildings, high-roofed, with means to allow the escape of the noxious fumes arising from the metal when pouring.* In 1831, the first year of which a record is preserved, there were 1,785 brass-workers, male and female, in Birmingham. In 1841 the number had risen to

* *Resources, &c., of Birmingham*, pp. 359, 360.

3,408, in 1851 to 6,695, and in 1861 to 8,334. Now the workpeople cannot be fewer than 9,500.* Birmingham is now as famous for its brass as Sheffield for its steel, Manchester for its cottons, and Bradford for its woollens.

All sorts of other metal wares have a home in Birmingham, from the most artistic gold and silver workmanship to the most trumpery imitations, outgrowths of the electro-plating process, for which the Elkingtons are especially notable, with a multitude of other articles, such as beads and buttons, snuff-boxes and matches, papier-mâché goods and glass.

But a detailed enumeration of the various manufactures of Birmingham would fill a volume, and a dozen volumes would not suffice for description of all the manufacturing contrivances and appliances that give occupation to at least a million Englishmen and Englishwomen. Some few of them, like the homely trades of bootmaking and tailoring, observe the rules adopted centuries ago, though here, even, the sewing-machine is now effecting a revolution; in a great many others, like woollen and linen manufactures, the old trades are carried on in new ways; and in many others again, like electro-plating, both trades and ways are new. Of these last, one very noteworthy illustration is in the history of the india-rubber trade. In 1770 Priestley called attention to the newly-found substance as useful to artists in obliterating pencil-marks. In 1771 a London instrument-maker named Nairne, living opposite to the Royal Exchange, began to sell it in cubical pieces of half an inch size, for three shillings each. It was not put to much more important use till 1823, when the late Mr. Charles Macintosh, of Glasgow, patented his famous waterproof clothing, and started a manufactory in Manchester. Shortly afterwards his partner, Mr. Hancock, discovered the vulcanizing process, and thus led the way to numberless fresh applications of

* *Resources, &c., of Birmingham*, pp. 361, 362.

the substance. Messrs. Macintosh's works are now carried on in a building six storeys high, and covering more than two acres of ground; and there are upwards of six hundred india-rubber manufactories, large or small, in operation in various parts of the world, producing articles valued at 880,000*l.*, each year. Of these at least half are in Great Britain.

All the thousands of men who have brought their various branches of manufacture to perfection deserve to be ranked as merchants. They it is who give chief occupation to the merchants proper. These latter are, in fact, principally agents for procuring from foreign parts certain manufactured goods and vastly greater quantities of raw material to be handled by the English manufacturers, and then distributed for use among English buyers, or sent abroad in their altered state by the foreign merchants.

It is curious to note how many of these merchants really are foreign merchants, by virtue of their nationality as well as the character of their traffic. The true Englishman seems best adapted for manufacturing energy, for the management of vast numbers of men who can be under his personal supervision, and of machinery which, however immense, he can inspect with his own eyes. As a merchant, he generally fears to embark with the boldness necessary to eminence in his calling, or if he does embark, he is apt to fail. There are, of course, many notable exceptions, but they prove the rule. By far the greater number of our foremost merchants are either Germans or Americans. Sir William Brown, the great merchant of Liverpool, and Alexander Henry, of Manchester, though Irishmen by birth, were Americans by education; and Mr. Peabody, perhaps the foremost merchant in all London, by reason of his vast commercial dealings, as well as by reason of the munificent way in which he applies some of the proceeds of those dealings, is altogether an American. Yet more numerous are the Germans, headed, in the last generation, by the

Rothschilds, and now famously represented by the house of Frühling and Göschen. Germans have the double advantage of being better linguists than Englishmen, and of possessing greater aptitude in estimating the wants and capabilities of foreign markets.

Of prosperous merchants, however, whether natives or foreigners, England contains a goodly number, abounding most in London, Liverpool, and the other great ports of the kingdom. The merchants of the seaports, trading with foreign countries, are of course much more important and influential than those of the inland towns, whose chief business is with other inland towns, or who work merely as collectors of the goods that are to be sent abroad with help of the foreign merchants. London and Liverpool are, in fact, the great emporiums of the world. Through them pass considerably more than half of the 165,000,000*l.*'s worth of articles brought into the country, and of the 270,000,000*l.*'s worth of articles exported, London having more than a quarter of the whole, and Liverpool, thanks to its proximity to the great manufacturing districts of the northern and midland counties, engrossing more than a third. Some evidence of the vastness of this traffic appears in the docks that have been built for its accommodation. Liverpool, which in Sir Thomas Johnson's day could hardly be allowed to have its first little dock, with an area of less than three acres and a half, and a length of only 557 yards, now possesses docks and basins very nearly seventeen miles in length, with the addition of more than five miles of docks on the opposite side of the Mersey. Of the Liverpool docks the largest are the Prince's and the Queen's Docks, Huskisson, Brunswick, Coburg and George's Docks. They are thirty-nine in all, and Birkenhead has four of its own, the Western Float of Wallasey Pool being the finest dock in the world.

London has not so many docks as Liverpool, and those it has are not all of them so well adapted to commercial purposes. They are, however, larger and more imposing

than any of the docks of the Mersey, with the exception of Wallasey Pool. London had not in former times the same necessity for docks as Liverpool; the old-fashioned quays and wharves of the Thames offering facilities for loading and unloading which were not possible on the open line of the Mersey. But near the middle of the eighteenth century these old wharves and quays began to be quite insufficient for the growing wants of commerce. At last, in 1795, a plan was fairly started by the West India merchants for the construction of a dock and adjacent warehouses, adapted to the trade in which they were engaged. The projected capital of 800,000*l.* was subscribed in a couple of days, and, after five years spent in obtaining the sanction of Parliament, the West India Docks were begun in 1800, and opened for business in 1802. In 1801 the London Docks were commenced, to be finished in 1805 at a cost of 2,000,000*l.* They were 100 acres in extent, with room for 500 ships at a time, and with warehouses large enough to hold 230,000 tons of the wine, brandy, tobacco, rice, and miscellaneous articles for which they were specially designed. The East India Docks were sanctioned in 1803, 'for the accommodation of the East India shipping of the port of London.' In 1838 they were united with the West India Docks, the two having a surface of 87 acres, with room for 624 vessels, and warehouses able to contain about 200,000 tons of goods. On one occasion there lodged in them 20,000,000*l.*'s worth of colonial produce, comprising 148,563 casks of sugar, 70,895 barrels and 33,648 bags of coffee, 35,158 pipes of rum and Madeira, 14,000 logs of mahogany and 21,000 tons of logwood.* These three establishments had, for some twenty years, a monopoly in the dock-business of London. In 1823 the Saint Katherine's Docks were instituted 'on the principle of free competition in trade, and without any exclusive privileges and immunities,' as it was declared in the Act of Parliament permitting them. They

* *The Land we Live in*, vol. ii., p. 40.

were constructed by Telford in more imposing shape than any of the others, on as much space as could be obtained between the London Docks and the Tower. That space measured 23 acres, and was obtained by the demolition of 1,250 houses, and the turning out of 11,300 residents in them, at a cost of about 2,000,000*l.*; but it was soon found to be wholly inadequate to the wants of the City. Therefore, in 1850, the Victoria Docks were set up, with all the later appliances of engineering and mechanical progress. In 1860 the Victoria Docks gave shelter to 2,682 ships, with a burthen of 850,337 tons; the East and West India Docks to 1,200 ships carrying 498,366 tons; the London Docks to 1,032 ships with 424,338 tonnage, and the Saint Katherine's Docks to 905 ships with 223,397 tonnage. Very extensive, also, are the Commercial Docks on the south side of the Thames.*

If the docks of London are smaller than those of Liverpool, the aggregate trade is of course greater. Dover and Folkestone, Southampton and Portsmouth, with other maritime towns, are, indeed, really ports of London, while the business of Liverpool has to be divided between its own merchants and the traders of Manchester, and the adjacent seats of manufacture. Liverpool engrosses four-fifths of the trade of Great Britain with the United States, and also has extensive commerce with other parts of America, North and South; with the West and East Indies, and with China. Yet more varied and comprehensive is the trade of London. Its ships go to every quarter of the world, and it is resorted to by the merchants of every land, both for the produce and manufactures of England, and for the goods imported from abroad for immediate re-shipment. Though robbed of the East India monopoly, it retains more than three-quarters of the stupendous trade that has grown up with India, receiving nearly all its produce, with the exception of cotton, which goes direct to Liverpool or Glasgow. It receives nearly seven-

* Capper, *The Port and Trade of London* (London, 1862), pp. 147-163; *The Land we Live in*, vol. iii., pp. 37-44.

eighths of the coffee sent from Ceylon, and from China it imports nearly all the tea sent to this country, with about a third of its silk. Australia sends to London more than half of the wool grown for English use; and to it come about a fifth of the corn, and a sixth of the wool, nearly half of the tobacco, and quite half of the sugar despatched to Great Britain from the West Indies and the continent of America. Moreover, it absorbs more than half of the English trade with Europe, receiving about a quarter of the grain, about half of the provisions, about two-thirds of the wines and spirits, and nearly all the live cattle, with a goodly share of all the other commodities that are brought thence for sale among us. In return for these imports, it exports a sixth of the textile fabrics, cotton, woollen, linen, and silk that are manufactured in England for foreign or colonial use, a quarter of the wrought and unwrought metals, and a third of the finished machinery, about half of the leather, and more than half of the provisions and miscellaneous articles which are sent abroad each year.*

If in these general articles of commerce London engrosses nearly a fourth of the whole business of Great Britain, it has almost a monopoly in another branch of trade. Nearly all the gold and silver bullion and specie, either imported or exported, enters, quits, or passes through the town in which the Bank of England and the Mint are lodged. In 1865 London received gold valued at 5,045,000*l.* from Australia, 4,298,000*l.* from the United States, and 5,126,000*l.* from other places, in all, 14,469,000*l.*; of which rather more than half was sent abroad again, 6,072,000*l.* to the continent of Europe, 575,000*l.* to India and Egypt, 1,581,000*l.* to Brazil and South America, and 245,000*l.* to other places. In the same year 4,923,000*l.* came to London in silver from Mexico, 72,000*l.* from Brazil, 1,654,000*l.* from the Continent, and 306,000*l.* from other parts, in all, 6,955,000*l*; and of this nearly all was sent abroad again, 3,801,000*l.* to India and

* Capper, pp. 187, 188, &c.

Egypt, 2,703,000*l.* to the Continent, and 193,000*l.* to other parts.

These figures show an excess of imports over exports, in gold and silver bullion and specie of 6,254,000*l.* The increased wealth of the country, however, is by no means indicated by the increase of gold and silver in its possession. Wealth is now understood to be neither money by itself, according to the shallow systems of economical science that preceded the times of Adam Smith, nor, as Adam Smith defined it, 'the annual produce of the land and labour of society;' but 'all useful or agreeable things which possess exchangeable value.'* This, indeed, is the oldest view of all 'We call wealth,' said Aristotle, 'everything whose value is measured by money'—money being the most convenient standard of measurement, or the most portable representative of the wealth, which is composed alike of land and its material products, such as the houses that are built on it, the corn that is grown from it, the minerals that are dug out of it, and the thousand and one manufactured articles that result from its cultivation; of the labour that is expended upon those operations, and in all other exercises of muscle and brain; and of incorporeal, transferable property, like shares in trading companies, mortgages on material possessions, or property in the public funds.† Money, therefore, now really consists, not only of the coin issued from the Mint, and of

* Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, (ed. 1864), p. 6.

† 'A simple invention it was,' says Mr. Carlyle, 'in the old-world grazier, sick of lugging his slow ox about the country till he got it bartered for corn or oil, to take a piece of leather, and thereon scratch or stamp the mere figure of an ox, or *pecus*; put it in his pocket, and call it *pecunia*, money. Yet hereby did barter grow sale, the leather money is now golden and paper, and all miracles have been out-miracled; for there are Rothschilds and English National Debts; and whoso has sixpence is sovereign—to the length of sixpence—over all men; commands cooks to feed him, philosophers to teach him, kings to mount guard over him—to the length of sixpence.' *Sartor Resartus* (London, 1858), p. 24. The whole question of wealth, value, money, and credit, is excellently discussed in Mr. Macleod's *Theory and Practice of Banking*, of which a second edition has been issued this year.

the notes issued from the Bank of England on the security of the coin or bullion retained in its coffers, and of the debts for which Government is answerable, but also of all other marketable symbols of property. Bills of exchange, promissory notes, and all the various paper equivalents of wealth, real or assumed, are now of vastly more extensive currency than that which has the Mint mark, or the Bank of England stamp.

And the trade in these materials is, now-a-days, the most gigantic of all. The farmer and the miner bring to light the buried treasures of the earth; the manufacturer makes those treasures available for use; and the merchant either brings them together for manufacture, or, when they are manufactured, sends them far and near to every district that is in need of them; but it is the banker who provides the circulating medium, without which none of those businesses could conveniently or efficiently be carried on. The richest and most influential men in all the world are now the bankers and bill-discounters, the negotiators of foreign wants, and other dealers in public credit. Hence the vast importance of the Stock Exchange—a shabby little building in Capel Court—in which millions pass each day from hand to hand, partly in answer to the healthy requirements of trade, and partly, perhaps chiefly, in furtherance of wanton and often ruinous speculation. The great financial question of the day is how to regulate this institution so as best to meet the needs of honest trading, and to leave least room for the gambling and fraud which are the chief causes of money panics and commercial disasters. But there can be no question as to the magnitude of its operations, and the extent of its influence. In 1865, besides all its traffic in the English funds, in foreign shares, and in the shares of the innumerable public companies already in existence, the Stock Exchange was the scene of negotiation for six new foreign loans, amounting in all to 46,236,363*l.*, and for two hundred and eighty-seven companies, with a professed capital of

106,995,000*l.*, all available for speculative purposes, and with an actual deposit of 12,174,790*l.**

Most of these were of course Limited Liability Companies; this being now the favourite form of speculation in succession to the older kind of joint-stock trading that came into fashion about forty years before, and to the railway mania that assumed importance some twenty years afterwards. Joint-stock enterprise is undoubtedly an absolute necessity in the present stage of commercial development, and there is much to be said in favour of the Limited Liability principle, introduced in the hope of correcting some evils consequent on the older modes of operation. It is not strange or unadvisable that great private undertakings which have advanced, under private management, to such vastness that they can hardly be carried on without the addition of fresh capital and the introduction of fresh managers, should be turned into joint-stock companies; and there are other enterprises which, like banks, cannot be conducted safely without a larger guarantee than private capitalists can generally give; or which, like railways or docks, can only be entered upon with resources that no single speculator—though a Rothschild or a Thornton—has command of. But nine-tenths of the companies now formed, under the Limited Liability Act, have no such excuses. A great many of them are

* Thus analysed in the *Economist*:—

Companies.	No. of Companies.	Capital Authorized.	Capital Offered.	Deposit.
Manufacturing and Trading	116	£28,635,000	£22,207,900	£3,890,290
Banking	11	15,200,000	10,400,000	1,465,000
Railways	14	12,720,000	8,140,000	1,180,900
Financial and Discount	10	12,200,000	9,025,000	1,095,000
Building and Investment	32	9,815,000	7,350,000	1,186,250
Assurance	7	9,250,000	3,050,000	395,000
Shipping	15	6,170,000	4,235,000	729,100
Mining	49	4,505,000	4,196,000	1,038,000
Gas	6	2,025,000	1,750,000	370,000
Hotels	12	1,300,000	1,250,000	264,500
Miscellaneous	15	5,175,000	3,975,000	560,750
	287	106,995,000	75,578,900	12,174,790

projected in dishonesty, and worked unscrupulously, until the inevitable failure ensues, showing a waste of all the capital invested, and gain to none but the moneyless projectors. Many others are undertaken honestly, but by men unfit for business, and in furtherance of plans that are generally unbusinesslike. They, too, are certain, sooner or later, to fail; and experience proves that many, even of the companies established from good motives and conducted in honest ways, are utterly untrustworthy. They all have this element of weakness—that they are built up with money in which the actual managers of the concerns have but little interest; and that, therefore, the money is spent more recklessly, and responsibilities are assumed more fearlessly than would be the case if the capitalists looked after their own business, or if the managers had to bear the whole or any adequate share of the risk.

From this prevalence of joint-stock undertakings, however, there seems likely to ensue an entire change in the system of modern trade, a return, with differences necessarily resulting from the growth of civilization during the last twelve or fourteen centuries, to something like the method of the oldest commerce of our island.

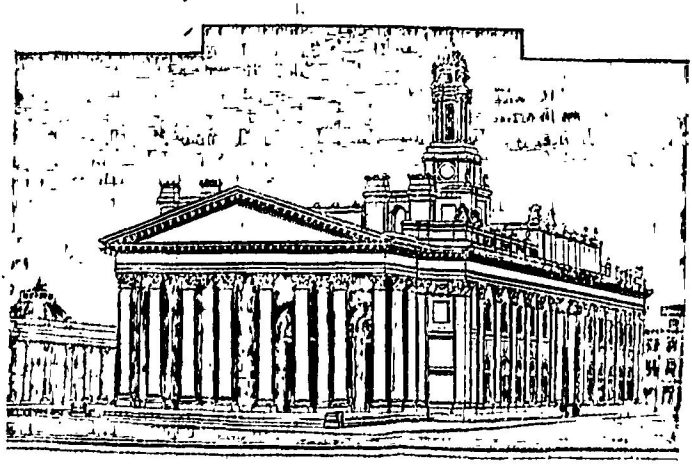
In early days all men were merchants. Every one who had grown anything on his own fields, or made anything with his own hands, or brought anything from foreign countries by his own labour, himself took it to market, either to barter it for something else of which he was in need, or to dispose of it for money, and with that money to make purchases to his taste. As society advanced, it became expedient for certain classes to devote themselves to productive labour, and to leave the business of buying and selling, on a large scale, in the hands of other classes specially prepared or fitted for the work. So it has been for many centuries, and in each century trade has become more restricted in its character, none being able to enter upon it prosperously who do not give to it all their energies. The most energetic have been most successful, and during

the last hundred years merchant princes have acquired influence and wealth unparalleled in the history of earlier times. Now it is no uncommon thing for cotton-spinners and iron-masters to have several thousand persons in their employ; and our greatest merchants, like the Barings or the Rothschilds, if their immediate servants are fewer, are really masters of far greater numbers, since both manufacturers and their workpeople, and shipowners and their sailors, contribute to their maintenance, and look to them, in return, for the employment that gives them subsistence. As society progresses, it is found that commercial enterprises, to be thoroughly successful, must be carried on in more and more gigantic ways, as thus the new appliances of machinery can be used most economically, and all the expenses of production can be most reduced.

But this arrangement, of subjecting thousands to a single individual, and of allowing by far the greater share of the profits to enrich that single individual, while the thousands have to be content with weekly earnings, which, whether much or little, are at any rate kept always at the lowest possible point by competition in an overstocked labour-market, is manifestly unjust. The injustice has afforded some excuse for the numberless strikes and combinations in which, during the last two or three generations, have been squandered both money and the physical strength that goes to the making of money; and which, if they have ruined some rich masters, have brought terrible sufferings upon thousands and thousands of the labouring classes. Working people themselves, however, are learning the folly of all such violent measures, and are entering upon a sounder course of action.

Seeing that richer men are uniting in joint-stock companies, each with several hundreds or thousands of shareholders, they are resolving that they, too, will form co-operative societies, and manage trades or manufactories, in which they will be partners as well as labourers. In Rochdale, Manchester, and elsewhere, this disposition is very apparent.

Already there are large establishments in which business is successfully carried on by companies of workmen, under the guidance of directors chosen from and by themselves. In other instances the masters have wisely admitted their labourers to partnership with them, taking to themselves a fair remuneration for the capital they have embarked, paying the men at market rates for the work that they do, and equitably sharing all the profits with them. This practice, once adopted and found successful, must certainly be extended. When the grievous differences that have long existed between masters and workpeople are thus removed, the real enfranchisement of the labouring classes will begin.



THE ROYAL EXCHANGE, LONDON.

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